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BRITISH EDUCATION:

Or, The SOURCE of the Diſorders of GREAT BRITAIN.

BEING

An ESSAY towards proving, that the Immorality, Ignorance, and falſe Taſte, which ſo generally prevail, are the natural and neceſſary Conſequences of the preſent defective SYSTEM of EDUCATION.

WITH

An Attempt to ſhew, that a Revival of the ART of SPEAKING, and the STUDY OF OUR OWN LANGUAGE, might contribute, in a great meaſure, to the Cure of thoſe EVILS.

IN THREE PARTS.

I. Of the Uſe of theſe Studies to RELIGION, and MORALITY; as alſo, to the Support of the BRITISH CONSTITUTION.

II. Their abſolute Neceſſity in order to refine, aſcertain, and fix the ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

III. Their Uſe in the Cultivation of the IMITATIVE ARTS: ſhewing, that were the STUDY of ORATORY made a neceſſary Branch of the EDUCATION of YOUTH, POETRY, MUSIC, PAINTING, and SCULPTURE, might arrive at as high a Pitch of Perfection in ENGLAND, as ever they did in ATHENS or ROME.

By THOMAS SHERIDAN, A. M.

Hoc opus, hoc ſtudium, parvi properemus, et ampli,
Si volumus patriæ, ſi nobis vivere chari. HOR.

DUBLIN:
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M,DCC,LVI.

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A N

ADDRESS

To the RIGHT HONOURABLE

Philip Dormer Stanhope,

EARL OF

CHESTERFIELD.

MY LORD,

IT is not from an affectation of novelty, nor yet entirely from an averſion to the word, *Dedication*, (though I confeſs from the ſhameful proſtitution of it I have long held it in contempt) that I have ventured to alter the form which cuſtom has preſcribed

on theſe occaſions; but merely from a regard to propriety. As I do not conſider this in it's eſſential parts to be of the nature of dedications, as I have none of their uſual ends in view, neither have I obſerved any of the uſual forms. I have aſked no permiſſion to prefix your Lordſhip's name; I have prepared no gilded book with Turky cover to be preſented with one hand, whilſt the other is held open to receive the ſordid wages of adulation: I ſhall not pretend to ſketch out your character, which I confeſs is far above my abilities; I have no thoughts of doing you honour, which in me would be the height of preſumption; I have no expectation of deriving any to myſelf from prefixing your name, ſince the ſcandalous abuſes of a cuſtom, originally well founded, have put an end to all ſuch power, even in names of higheſt merit.

My Lord, as a ſubject of Great Britain, I claim a privilege to addreſs You, as a patriot, upon a point which concerns the public good. Nor is it in my own name only I preſume to claim this privilege; it is, my

Lord,

Lord, in the name of the moſt auguſt body in the world, the people of Great Britain.

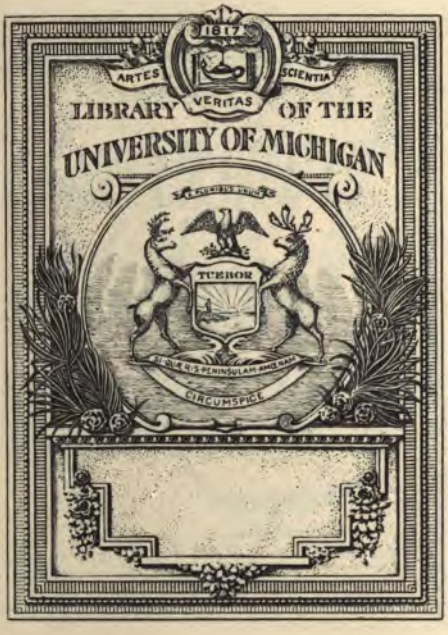
In their name I have a right to addreſs you to patronize and encourage a ſcheme, peculiarly calculated to promote their honour and intereſt. And that you are the proper perſon to be addreſſed to on ſuch an occaſion, will be confirmed by the general voice of the nation. To prove this, it is only neceſſary to mention what the ſcheme is: *A deſign to revive the long loſt art of oratory, and to correct, aſcertain, and fix the Engliſh language.* Let the queſtions then be aſked, Who is the fitteſt to preſide over ſuch an undertaking? Who is the beſt qualified to promote it, and to enſure it's ſucceſs? I am much deceived if there would be a moment's heſitation, and if the name of CHESTERFIELD would not inſtantly be pronounced by every one, who is a judge of the ſubject.

The utility of the deſign to the public in general is the ſubject of the following eſſay; how far your Lordſhip is particularly

concerned in it, more immediately belongs to this addreſs.

Upon a ſimilar occaſion, Doctor *Swift* made uſe of the following words to the Lord Treaſurer *Oxford*. 'My Lord, as diſ-'intereſted as you appear to the world, I 'am convinced, that no man is more in 'the power of a prevailing favourite paſſion 'than yourſelf; I mean, the deſire of true 'and laſting honour, which you have borne 'along with you through every ſtage of your 'life: and I muſt believe, that the deſire of 'fame hath been no inconſiderable motive 'to quicken you in the purſuit of thoſe 'actions which will beſt deſerve it. But, at 'the ſame time, I muſt be ſo plain as to 'tell your Lordſhip, that if you will not 'take ſome care to ſettle our language, and 'put it into a ſtate of continuance, I can not 'promiſe that your memory ſhall be pre-'ſerved above an hundred years, farther 'than by imperfect tradition.'

The application of the above paſſage need not be pointed out by me. I ſhall only ſay, that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The many important ſervices you did that country during your too ſhort adminiſtration; the noble deſigns you had planned to put an end to their calamities, and to raiſe them to that flouriſhing condition which ſeems to have been intended for them by bounteous nature, had Providence permitted your return to that government; as they are deeply engraved on the hearts of all well-wiſhers to Ireland, ſo ought they to be handed down in their proper luſtre to poſterity. If they were ſo diſplayed, who knows but ſome future governor, by ſeeing the means, might be inſpired with the inclination of making a whole people happy? Who knows but ſome future politician might be convinced, that nothing could contribute more to the ſtrength and power of England, than the flouriſhing ſtate of Ireland?

Amongſt the many points calculated by your Lordſhip for the advantage of that country, there was none which ſeemed to promiſe ſo highly, or to bid ſo fair for raiſing it at once to a conſpicuous point of

of view, as your propoſal publickly made to the provoſt and fellows of the univerſity, for the endowment of proper lectures and exerciſes in the art of reading and ſpeaking Engliſh. But this deſign, amongſt many others, fell to the ground ſoon after your departure, though had the prayers of the nation for your return taken place, it muſt infallibly have been eſtabliſhed.

I own, my Lord, that this propoſal, and the unexpected honour you did me, in mentioning my name, as one who might be uſeful on ſuch an occaſion, firſt made me think a ſcheme practicable, which had long before taken poſſeſſion of me in idea. So great an authority at once convinced me that the deſign was right: and the opinion of ſo diſcerning a judge made me have ſome confidence in my own abilities. And when I conſidered the power of the patron to promote ſuch an undertaking, I made no doubt of the ſucceſs. Theſe were the encouraging circumſtances, which gave birth to the following eſſay. For thus I reaſoned with myſelf; Sure the noble propoſer, and I may

I may ſay author of the ſcheme, who puſhed it ſo warmly in another country, will not ſlacken his endeavours to promote the ſucceſs of it in his own. And though he is no longer a Vice-roy, no longer in employment, he is ſtill Lord CHESTERFIELD.

As ſuch, my Lord, I addreſs you; not as Swift did the Lord Treaſurer, where he ſays, 'I take it to be your Lordſhip's duty, 'as *prime miniſter*, to give order for in-'ſpecting our language;' for you, my Lord, are no prime miniſter, and I ſhould be ſorry to ſee a *vizier* in this country iſſuing out his orders even for ſo uſeful a purpoſe: no, my Lord, I addreſs you as a *good citizen* to employ the extraordinary talents with which Providence has bleſſed you, and the high eſtimation which theſe have procured you amongſt your countrymen (productive of more real power in this free nation than monarchs can delegate) in ſo uſeful and glorious a purpoſe.

I call

I call upon you my Lord, in the name of our anceſtors. Let their minds be no longer a prey to the canker of time, as their bodies are to the worms; let them not periſh all, like the beaſts of the field, but let their fair memorials be preſerved 'till time ſhall be no more. Suffer not our Shakeſpear, and our Milton, to become two or three centuries hence what Chaucer is at preſent, the ſtudy only of a few poring antiquarians, and in an age or two more the victims of bookworms. I call upon you in the name of the preſent geniuſes ready to ſtart, if the prize were worthy of them, and the race of glory equal to their immortal longings. I call upon you, my Lord, in the name of poſterity, to make an unalienable ſettlement of language upon them, the nobleſt eſtate, next to that of liberty, which it is in our power to bequeath.

If you do not make the attempt, I muſt ſay to you, as Swift did to the Lord Treaſurer, you will be the moſt inexcuſable perſon breathing; firſt to your country, as

you

you are perhaps the only perſon who have it in your power to ſecure to it ſo invaluable a bleſſing; next, to yourſelf, in neglecting ſo glorious an opportunity of eternizing your name. The name of the eſtabliſher of our language may by poſterity be held not in leſs veneration than the eſtabliſher of our conſtitution.

Should the ſtudy of eloquence become as univerſal in this country, as it once was in Athens and Rome, there can be no doubt but that there will be found as many Engliſh names equally eminent in that art, as thoſe revered ones of antiquity. But it hath ſometimes happened that nature has aſtoniſhed the world, in a particular age and country, with a genius of a ſingular kind, and never afterwards copied her work, or caſt another in the ſame mould. Such was the Cæſar of Rome, who amidſt the crowd of orators ſhone forth eminently diſtinguiſhed, and ſeemed to be a ſpecies by himſelf. Should our language now be fixed, poſterity will know, as well as we of the preſent age, that we have already equalled Rome in

in this reſpect, and it will for ever redound to the glory of this country, that England alone can boaſt of having produced a rival to Cæſar in that point. That I may not be thought partial, or in the leaſt to have exaggerated on this occaſion, I ſhall here preſent the picture of that great man, in his oratorial capacity, as drawn by the maſterly hand of Cicero.

Quid noſter hic Cæſar? nonne novam quandam rationem attulit orationis, & dicendi genus induxit prope ſingulare? Quis unquam res præter hunc tragicas pene comice, triſtes remiſſe, ſeveras hilare, forenſes ſcenica prope venuſtate, tractavit, atque ita, ut neque jocus magnitudine rerum excluderetur, nec gravitas facetiis minueretur?

Such an extraordinary genius added a new luſtre to Rome, as it gave them a ſuperiority over Greece in her moſt favourite art. Since England has produced an equal, it is of conſequence to the honour of the country that the memorial of it ſhould be preſerved; as there is the greateſt reaſon to believe

believe that ſhe may never produce another. For as nature never beſtowed but one ſuch upon all antiquity, why ſhould we hope that ſhe ſhould be more profuſe to us? The memorial of it can be preſerved no other way but by fixing our language. If that be not done, 'I can only promiſe your 'Lordſhip (give me leave to addreſs you in a parody of what Dr. Swift ſaid to Lord Oxford on a like occaſion) 'that about two 'hundred years hence, ſome painful com-'piler, who will be at the trouble of ſtudy-'ing old language, may inform the world, 'that in the reign of George the ſecond 'lived Philip Earl of Cheſterfield, remark-'able for eloquence in his days, and for a 'peculiar vein of pleaſantry, which in an 'extraordinary manner captivated the hearts 'of his hearers. That ſome of his ora-'tions ſtill remained, to be found in a few 'curious collections, but the language was 'ſo obſolete, that he could diſcover no 'traces in them of that wit and humour 'which were ſo admired in his own 'times.'

It may be expected that I ſhould not cloſe this addreſs, without offering ſome arguments on my own account, and from ſome hints dropped above, laying a perſonal claim to your Lordſhip's countenance and favour in my undertaking. But after having urged motives of ſo much a nobler kind, any of that ſort would appear with but an ill grace.

Perhaps it may be thought in this, that I am acting the part of an artful accountant, who by omitting ſome articles makes the ballance appear in his own favour, and that by this means I have cunningly brought your Lordſhip into my debt, But I can ſoon clear up that matter, by declaring that, during your Lordſhip's government of Ireland, you heaped ſuch obligations on me, by your countenance and powerful aſſiſtance in promoting another undertaking, which I once fondly thought would have been of laſting ſervice to my country, that I have ever ſince looked upon myſelf as greatly your Lordſhip's debtor. And I had no method,

method, in my low ſituation of life, of clearing off any part of the large ſcore, but that of throwing an opportunity in your way of doing a great public good. I am, my Lord, with the moſt profound reſpect

Your Lordſhip's

Moſt obliged,

Moſt devoted,

And obedient ſervant,

THOMAS SHERIDAN.

PREFACE.

IT is not altogether from a compliance with cuſtom, that the author of the following eſſay has thought it proper to write a preface to his work; but he was induced to it from two material conſiderations. The firſt is, to endeavour to beſpeak the reader's indulgence to the many errors and inaccuracies, which it is more than probable he will find ſcattered throughout the whole performance. Yet he doubts not but that the candid and humane will make all proper allowances, when they are informed that the whole was begun and finiſhed during a few months receſs in the laſt ſummer; and that whilſt he was about it he had repeated attacks of a diſorder, which often put it out of his power to give the leaſt attention to it for ſeveral days together, and at the beſt ſeldom allowed him an application of more than three or four hours in any one day. He knows with how bad a grace all excuſes on account of haſte come before the public, ſince the anſwer is obvious enough, that an author is under no compulſion to give his works to the world, and it is a reſpect due to the public to keep them by him, 'till he has rendered them at leaſt as finiſhed as his talents can make them. But if the matter here treated of be of ſuch importance as the writer pretends, it is impoſſible

poſſible that it can be too ſoon offered to the conſideration of the world, even in a rude and undigeſted ſtate. Nor could any little addition of fame, which the author might expect from keeping it by him 'till he had poliſhed the work, compenſate for the loſs which the public might ſuſtain by ſuch delay. Indeed the little pretenſions, which the author has to fame on the ſcore of writing, have made this in him but a ſmall ſacrifice. It is now more than ten years ſince he has been an alien to all learned ſtudies, and a ſtranger to books in general, except ſuch only as were neceſſary to the diſcharge of a troubleſome and laborious employment. This is his firſt attempt as a writer, without any previous ſteps taken, without any pains to qualify him for ſo difficult an office. Thus circumſtanced, how vain were all hopes of praiſe! Happy indeed ſhall he think himſelf, if he can eſcape cenſure! He hopes the matter, whereof he treats, not the manner in which it is handled, will be chiefly conſidered by the reader; as the whole of his humble pretences to merit ariſes from the deſign, not execution. Or ſhould his ſtyle be diſapproved, he will at leaſt have the conſolation of affording in himſelf a ſtrong example of a point, which he has laboured to inculcate, the neceſſity of ſtudying our own language in our early years.

The other conſideration was, leſt the reader might imagine from ſome paſſages in this eſſay, that he has any thoughts in the plan, which he has promiſed at

at the end of the work, of interfering with the preſent eſtabliſhment of ſchools and colleges. To obviate any ſuch ſurmiſe, he begs leave to declare, that the reflections which he has thrown out upon the many evils attending the preſent mode if education, have not been levelled at the inſtitutions themſelves, but at the abuſe of them, thro' the obſtinacy and ignorance of pedantic maſters, and unſkilful tutors, [To the care of ſuch, it is to be feared, too many of the youth of theſe kingdoms have been committed. He is ſo far from thinking a ſchool and college education unneceſſary, that he knows not how a man can well be a finiſhed gentleman without having firſt paſſed thro' thoſe. Nay, a competent knowlege of all thoſe things which are taught there is eſſential to all ſuch as may hope to receive benefit from his plan. Nor has any thing precipitated the execution of his deſign ſo much, or given him ſuch ſanguine hopes of ſucceſs in it, as a late revolution in the two great ſchools of this kingdom. It is not long ſince a man ſufficiently young not to have any rooted prejudices, and yet of an age when judgement may be at it's utmoſt maturity, was placed at the head of Weſtminſter ſchool. It muſt be a doubt with all who have the pleaſure of knowing him, whether nature or art have contributed moſt to qualify him for the diſcharge of ſo important an employment. In him are united all the requiſites which Quintilian thought neceſſary to the forming a complete maſter; and by ſuch rules as are laid down by the great Roman, has the Engliſh preceptor ſquared his conduct. Ipſe nec habeat vitia, nec ferat. Non auſteritas

auſteritas ejus triſtis, non diſſoluta ſit comitas: ne inde odium, hinc contemtus oriatur. Plurimus ei de honeſto ac bono ſit ſermo. Nam quo ſæpius monuerit, hoc rarius caſtigabit. Minime iracundus; nec tamen eorum quæ emendanda erunt diſſimulator: ſimplex in docendo, patiens laboris, aſſiduus potius quam immodicus. Interrogantibus libenter reſpondeat, non interrogantes percontetur ultro. In laudandis diſcipulorum dictionibus, nec malignus, nec effuſus: quia res altera tædium laboris, altera ſecuritatem parit. In emendando quæ corrigenda erunt non acerbus, minimeque contumelioſus. Nam id quidem multos a propoſito ſtudendi fugat, quod quidam ſic objurgant, quaſi oderint. Ipſe aliquid, imo multa quotidie dicat, quæ ſecum audita referant. Licet enim ſatis exemplorum ad imitandum ex lectione ſuppeditet, tamen viva illa, ut dicitur, vox alit plenius, præcipueque præceptoris, quem diſcipuli, ſi modo recte ſint inſtituti, & amant, & verentur. Vix autem dici poteſt, quanto libentius imitemur eos quibus favemus. Sumat igitur ante omnia parentis erga diſcipulos ſuos animum, ac ſuccedere ſe in eorum locum a quibus ſibi liberi traduntur, exiſtimet. *Here is to be found an exact repreſentation of Dr. Markham's conduct towards his pupils; no wonder then that he meets with nothing but univerſal love and reverence on their parts.*

Indeed, if the greateſt ſweetneſs of diſpoſition, joined to the moſt manly firmneſs; the moſt ſolid judgement, to the moſt refined taſte; the fineſt invention and accuracy of deſign, to the niceſt ſkill and patient

patient aſſiduity in the execution; an extenſive knowlege in all affairs divine and human, adorned by all the chriſtian virtues; in ſhort, if an union of the cooleſt head and warmeſt heart in one and the ſame perſon, can form a complete preceptor for youth, England may boaſt of being in poſſeſſion of ſuch a perſon. Under ſuch a head, no wonder ſuch rapid improvements have been made in that ſchool, not only in all uſeful ſtudies, but in morals alſo; hitherto ſcarce thought to be part of the province of a teacher of Greek and Latin. Yet theſe are but the dawnings of this great genius. His noble plan for building a ſquare, which has already deſervedly met with a parliamentary ſanction, and ſome more extenſive deſigns, when executed, will ſhew him at his meridian height. And it is matter of great comfort to think, that there is the faireſt proſpect, from his youth and vigorous conſtitution, of his being able himſelf to ſee the glorious deſign finiſhed, without leaving it to the chance of being ſpoiled by bungling hands.

Happy it is for England, that at the ſame time there is placed at the head of the other great ſchool, a man who will not readily yield the palm in any of the above reſpects to his rival. One, who as he is much of the ſame age and vigour as the other, as he is poſſeſſed of ſimilar talents, ſo is he not inferior in an ardent deſire of diſcharging his duty to the utmoſt. Nor has fame been at all ſilent in regard to the many improvements in education already made by Mr. Barnard of Eton. From a proper emulation between two ſuch men, what happy fruits may not

be

be produced to this country? It is with great pleaſure that the author can aſſure the public, that amongſt many other good cuſtoms introduced into both thoſe ſchools, pronunciation and the art of ſpeaking are now made eſſential points. Upon ſuch foundations what ſuperſtructures may not be raiſed? There can be no doubt but that many excellent tutors are to be found in both univerſities, capable of promoting the growth of plants ſo judiciouſly reared; and their number muſt ſoon be much increaſed by thoſe who are tranſplanted thither from ſuch admirable ſeminaries. So that it will hereafter be entirely the fault of all parents who can afford it, from a wrong choice of places and perſons, if their ſons are not trained in the moſt perfect manner in the paths of knowlege and virtue.

This it was, which made the author boldly aſſert, that Britiſh education might now be rendered more complete, than that of any other nation in the world, either antient or modern. This it was which made him hope for the moſt perfect ſucceſs to his plan. Of which he ſhall ſay no more at preſent, but that it is entirely calculated to finiſh the education of a gentleman, *and to take it up only* where the univerſity leaves it.

THE

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BRITISH

EDUCATION, &c.

BOOK I. CHAP. I.

Of the Power of Education.

AMIDST the general outcry againſt the enormity of the times, the endeavours of our beſt writers and preachers to reform them, the attention of the legiſlature, ſo often rouzed of late by his majeſty's paternal care, and the number of penal laws made to check the progreſs of vice, the torrent is ſtill too ſtrong to be reſiſted, and theſe weak damms are borne away: irreligion, immorality, and corruption are viſibly increaſed, and daily gather new ſtrength.

If a phyſician ſhould find his patient ſtill growing worſe under the regimen he preſcribed, he would not obſtinately perſiſt in the ſame courſe,

but try new remedies. Yet if he be not acquainted with the ſource of the diſorder, he may go through the whole materia medica to no purpoſe. The firſt ſtep towards a cure is to know the cauſe of the diſeaſe, and when that is removed the effect will ceaſe of courſe.

When a nation is ſunk to a certain degree of depravity and corruption, penal laws are of little force. Their efficacy depends upon their execution, and when that is rendered difficult, or impoſſible, they become of little or no uſe. When the bulk of mankind are good, it is the intereſt of each individual to detect and puniſh a villain: when they are bad, it becomes their intereſt to ſcreen him from puniſhment for crimes, of which they are equally guilty, and conſequently equally liable to the ſame puniſhment. Thus the ſting of the law is taken out, or often turned upon the innocent. The few good are awed by the powerful confederacy amongſt the numerous wicked. If they attempt to bring an offender to juſtice, they are often branded with the name of informers; they are baffled by packed juries, and ſuborned witneſſes: or if they carry their point, it is at ſuch an expence as will deter moſt people from following their example. At ſuch a criſis, the virtuous few, finding their endeavours to ſerve the public ineffectual, or even dangerous, retire as ſoon as poſſible from the buſy world, and leave the field open to the vicious to range in at large without controul. They who ſtill keep their poſts,

and

and remain in the legiſlature as guardians to their country, may waſte their time in making new penal laws for new crimes; and the fertile invention of man in wickedneſs will furniſh them with ſufficient employment. Theſe laws, if not executed, are at beſt uſeleſs; but, when ſwelled to an immoderate ſize, become a greater evil than the diſeaſe.

When the law is trampled under foot, and puniſhment no longer dreaded, how can we expect that weaker inſtruments will have any effect? The edge of ſatyr cannot prevail againſt men, who cloath themſelves with vice, as with an armour; nor will the ſting of ridicule be felt by thoſe, who are invulnerable to ſhame.

Such ſymptoms in a ſtate are ſure prognoſticks of approaching ruin; and its end cannot be far off, unleſs prevented by adequate remedies. As the diſeaſe ariſes from an univerſal corruption of manners, it can be cured only by a general reformation. Our manners depend upon our notions and opinions, and our opinions and notions are the reſult of education. This, and this alone, muſt neceſſarily be the ſource of all our diſorders; and here, and here only, muſt we therefore look for a cure.

Wiſdom and knowlege are the parents of religion and virtue; folly and ignorance of vice and impiety: where wiſdom and knowlege are wanting in a nation, virtue and religion will hardly be found; and when ignorance and folly reign, vice and impiety will be ſeen triumphant. The

only way then to bring about a reformation of manners is to reſtore wiſdom and knowlege. This can be effected only by a right ſyſtem of education. Wiſdom, knowlege, and conſequently virtue, are not to be acquired any other way. If we look into the hiſtory of all nations, we ſhall find their flouriſhing ſtate owing to the proper education of their youth. What but that raiſed the petty ſtate of Athens to its amazing pitch of glory and power? What but that made Rome the miſtreſs of the world? By that the Chineſe government hath remained unaltered upwards of two thouſand years, notwithſtanding ſeveral inteſtine commotions, and ſeveral conqueſts by foreign enemies. Nay it ſtill continues the ſame, without the leaſt variation, altho' it was intirely ſubdued by the Tartars, in whoſe poſſeſſion it has been for more than a century.

But the prodigious power of education was never ſeen ſo ſtrongly as in the Spartan commonwealth; for by the force of that alone was their ſtate preſerved in vigour for upwards of ſeven hundred years, upon principles directly oppoſite to the nature of man. How much greater then muſt its power be in aſſiſting nature? Let us caſt our eyes towards the now barbarous Africk, once the ſource of arts and ſciences; to what oweth ſhe her preſent deplorable condition, but to the want of education? Whilſt, on the other hand, it is by that alone the northern and weſtern regions of Europe, once rude and ſavage, have riſen to their preſent ſplendour. So that it is evident there is

no

no eſſential difference from nature between men of different regions of the earth, but that the whole depends upon the culture of their underſtandings *. Nay ſuch is the power of a well diſciplined mind, that it hath been known that one or two perſons only of eminence in a ſtate, ſo trained, have ſuddenly raiſed their country from obſcurity to glory.

Thebes, and Macedon, on account of ſtupidity and ignorance, were held in ſuch contempt by the other ſtates of Greece, that their names were proverbial: yet when in the former of theſe Epaminondas and Pelopidas aroſe, enlightened by the precepts of Lyſis, one of the greateſt philoſophers of the age, they raiſed the Theban name to ſuch a pitch of glory, as to obſcure all others, and ſtruck terror into the mighty commonwealths of Sparta and of Athens. It is very remarkable alſo, that Philip, born in Macedon, happening to be an hoſtage in the houſe of the father of Epaminondas at Thebes, received the benefits of the ſame education, under the ſame tutor; and that this man afterwards raiſed the poor deſpiſed ſtate

* When Chaldea and Ægypt were learned and civil, Greece and Rome were rude and barbarous, as all Ægypt and Syria now are, and have been long. When Greece and Rome were at their heights in arts and ſciences, Gaul, Germany, Britain, were as ignorant and barbarous, as any parts of Greece or Turkey can be now.

Sir William Temple, eſſay upon ancient and modern learning.

of Macedon ſo high, as to give law to all Greece, and in ſome time to the greateſt part of the then known world. It was to the extraordinary care taken in his education by his father, that Rome owed her Scipio, the preſerver of his country, the conqueror of Carthage, one of the beſt men, and greateſt heroes of antiquity.

When Paulus Emilius conquered Perſeus, he looked down upon his riches with contempt, and would ſuffer his ſons to take nothing away but his library, which he looked upon as containing true mines of real treaſure.

There need no examples from hiſtory to prove, that the well-being of a ſtate depends upon the education of their youth. There cannot be a good and wiſe community, made up of fooliſh and vicious individuals; and individuals cannot be made wiſe or good, but by education. If that be faulty or wrong, the effects will neceſſarily ſhew themſelves in the lives of men. When the fountain head is polluted, the ſtreams which flow from it cannot be clear.

The power of the firſt impreſſions made upon the minds of men, and the influence they have upon their conduct ever after, is a beaten topic: holy writ and the claſſic writers abound in ſentences to this effect; and hiſtory furniſheth us with innumerable examples. Of which there is none more remarkable than that of Alexander the great; whoſe early mind received ſuch a tincture, and imbibed ſuch notions of falſe glory, from the leſſons of a ſervile flattering tutor, Leonides, as

could

could not afterwards be effaced by the pains and ſkill of an Ariſtotle.

From education alone have flowed all the various cuſtoms, and manners; all the different inſtitutions, civil and religious; all the ſeveral ſyſtems, moral and political, of the ſeveral nations of this peopled earth. If we are more unſettled in our notions, and conſequently more irregular in our actions, than any other nation under the ſun; if what the biſhop of Cloyne ſays be true, that, 'The pretenſions and diſcourſes of men throughout theſe kingdoms would, at firſt view, lead one to think that the inhabitants were all politicians; and yet, perhaps, political wiſdom hath in no age or country been more talked of or leſs underſtood. Licence is taken for the end of government, and popular humour for its origin. No reverence for the laws, no attachment to the conſtitution, little attention to matters of conſequence, and great altercation upon trifles; ſuch idle projects about religion and government, as if the public had both to chuſe; a general contempt of all authority, divine and human; an indifference about the prevailing opinions, whether they tend to produce order, or diſorder, to promote the empire of God, or the devil: theſe are the ſymptoms that ſtrongly mark the preſent age.' If all this, I ſay, be ſo, whence can it proceed but from a defective education, which, not taking care to ſettle the notions of men upon the baſis of right reaſon, leaves their unfurniſhed minds open to receive any opinion

that chance may throw in their way, that caprice may hunt after, or inclination graſp at?

Evident as this point is, is it not amazing, as if men were blind, or infatuated, that they have not hitherto turned their thoughts to examine the only ſource, from which all the happineſs or miſery of the nation muſt neceſſarily flow? That they ſhould employ their time either in crying out againſt the increaſing tide of corruption, which threatens a deluge to the land; or in endeavouring to raiſe damms in thoſe places where the breadth, depth, and rapidity of the waters, baffle all the efforts of man to ſtop their courſe? And though they daily find their labours ineffectual, and likely to continue ſo from the violence of the torrent, yet that they ſhould obſtinately perſiſt in the ſame courſe, without once going to the fountain head; which they might not only purge and cleanſe, but with eaſe divert its courſe into ſeveral channels, ſo as to ſend forth ſalubrious ſtreams to water the whole land.

Important as it is to the ſtate, education hath never once claimed the attention of the legiſlature ſince its firſt inſtitution. Tho' it was eſtabliſhed in times of great ignorance, and conſequently muſt be ſuppoſed to be very defective, yet have we gone on the ſame ſyſtem, with the ſame blind obedience, that the Roman catholics pay to the infallibility of the pope. Intereſting as it is to every individual of ſociety, yet no one topic hath leſs employed the pens of our writers. Whether it be that they were blinded by prejudice in favour

vour of a method in which they themſelves were trained; or that the difficulty of a reformation deterred them from the attempt, ſo it is, that we have in our whole language but two treatiſes of any note expreſsly written on that ſubject. The firſt, a ſhort one by Milton, the other, by Mr. Locke. The former clearly points out the faults and defects in our education, but the remedies propoſed are too ſtrong for men of a ſickly habit of body, made weak and feeble by long diſeaſe. They are calculated only for thoſe of robuſt athletic conſtitutions, labouring under ſmall diſorders; or, as himſelf expreſſes it, 'This is not a bow 'for every man to ſhoot in, but will require 'ſinews almoſt equal to thoſe which Homer gave 'Ulyſſes.' The other by Mr. Locke is only an attempt to mend and patch our preſent ſyſtem, ſuch as it is, and to make ſome alterations in it; but is far from containing any endeavour towards extending it. This he himſelf acknowleges in the latter part of his treatiſe, where he ſays, 'Tho' I am now come to a concluſion of 'what obvious remarks have ſuggeſted to me 'concerning education, I would not have it 'thought that I look on it as a juſt treatiſe on that 'ſubject. I have touched little more than thoſe 'heads which I judged neceſſary for the breeding 'of a young gentleman; and have now publiſhed 'thoſe my occaſional thoughts with this hope, 'that tho' this be far from being a complete treatiſe on this ſubject, or ſuch as that every one 'may find what will juſt fit his child in it, yet it

'may give ſome ſmall lights to thoſe whoſe con-
'cern for their dear little ones makes them ſo ir-
'regularly bold, that they dare venture to con-
'ſult their own reaſon in the education of their
'children, rather than wholly to rely on old
'cuſtom.'

In all well-regulated ſtates, the two principal points in view in the education of youth ought to be, firſt, to make them good men, good members of the univerſal ſociety of mankind; and in the next place to frame their minds in ſuch a manner, as to make them moſt uſeful to that ſociety to which they more immediately belong; and to ſhape their talents, in ſuch a way, as will render them moſt ſerviceable to the ſupport of that government, under which they were born, and on the ſtrength and vigour of which the well-being of every individual, in ſome meaſure, depends. If neither of theſe points are provided for in our ſyſtem, I cannot ſee how we are to expect good men or good ſubjects. Nay the contrary muſt in general be the conſequence, for the mind of man being active will neceſſarily find itſelf employment; if our youth are not trained in the right way, they will probably go wrong; if they are not taught to do good, they will be likely to commit evil.

This point is ſo obvious, that it might ſeem unneceſſary to ſupport it either by reaſon or authority; and yet ſo little attention has been paid to it, that it may not be wholly uſeleſs to quote the ſentiments of a man upon this head, who is allowed

lowed to have been poſſeſſed of the deepeſt penetration*. In his epiſtle dedicatory to his treatiſe on education, he has the following paſſages. 'I 'my ſelf have been conſulted of late by ſo many, 'who profeſs themſelves at a loſs how to breed 'their children, and the early corruption of 'youth is now become ſo general a complaint, 'that he cannot be thought wholly impertinent, 'who brings the conſideration of this matter on 'the ſtage, and offereth ſome thing, if it be but 'to excite others, or afford matter of correction: 'for errors in education ſhould be leſs indulged 'than any. Theſe, like faults in the firſt con-'coction, that are never mended in the ſecond, 'or third, carry their afterwards incorrigible taint 'with them, through all the parts and ſtations of 'life.

'The well-educating of their children is ſo 'much the duty and concern of parents, and the 'welfare and proſperity of the nation ſo much 'depend on it, that I would have every one lay 'it ſeriouſly to heart; and after having well 'examined and diſtinguiſhed what fancy, cuſtom, 'or reaſon adviſes in the caſe, ſet his helping 'hand to promote every where that way of train-'ing up youth, with regard to their ſeveral con-'ditions, which is the eaſieſt, ſhorteſt, and like-'lieſt to produce virtuous, uſeful, and able men 'in their diſtinct callings; tho' that moſt to be 'taken care of is the gentleman's calling. For

* Mr. Locke.

'if thoſe of that rank are by their education once 'ſet right, they will quickly bring all the reſt 'into order.'

In his treatiſe on education he ſays, 'I wiſh, 'that thoſe who complain of the great decay of 'chriſtian piety and virtue every where, and of 'learning-acquired improvements in the gentry 'of this generation, would conſider how to re-'trieve them in the next. This I am ſure, that 'if the foundation of it be not laid in the educa-'tion and principling of the youth, all other en-'deavours will be vain. And if the innocence, 'ſobriety, and induſtry of thoſe who are coming 'up, be not taken care of and preſerved, it will 'be ridiculous to expect, that thoſe who are to 'ſucceed next on the ſtage ſhould abound in 'that virtue, ability, and learning, which has hi-'therto made England conſiderable in the world.'

From theſe, and many other paſſages to the ſame effect, it is eaſy to ſee what his opinion was of our method of training youth, and how neceſſary he judged an alteration to be. Let us therefore with candour and impartiality examine our ſyſtem of education, as it now ſtands: I am much deceived if it will appear calculated to promote knowlege and virtue; on the contrary, I believe, it will be found to be the true ſource of all our follies, vices, ignorance, and falſe taſte. Should it prove ſo, this advantage will reſult from the enquiry, that in the courſe of it proper remedies will ſuggeſt themſelves as the errors appear, and

and upon a right application they cannot fail of effecting a cure.

CHAP. II.

Our preſent Syſtem of Education conſidered.

WHEN a boy can read Engliſh with tolerable fluency, which is generally about the age of ſeven or eight years, he is put to ſchool to learn Latin and Greek; where ſeven years are employed in acquiring but a moderate ſkill in thoſe languages. At the age of fifteen or thereabouts, he is removed to one of the univerſities, where he paſſeth four years more in procuring a more competent knowlege of Greek and Latin, in learning the rudiments of logic, natural philoſophy, aſtronomy, metaphyſics, and the heathen morality. At the age of nineteen or twenty a degree in the arts is taken, and here ends the education of a gentleman.

When education is ſaid to be finiſhed, one would imagine that the perſon is qualified immediately to enter upon his part on the great ſtage of life; and yet it would be hard to ſay what one duty of ſociety, or what one office as a citizen, he is qualified to diſcharge, or ſuſtain after his cloſe application of ſo many years. It may be aſked with Seneca, what fruits are to be expected *

* Ex ſtudiorum liberalium vana oſtentatione, et nihil ſanantibus literis? Cujus iſta errores minuent? cujus cupiditates prement? quem fortiorem, quem juſtiorem, quem liberaliorem facient?

from

'from a vain oſtentation of the politer ſtudies,
'and unavailing learning? Whoſe errors will
'they diminiſh? whoſe paſſions will they reſtrain?
'whom will they make more brave, more juſt,
'more liberal?'

The ill effects of this method are deſcribed by Milton in ſuch nervous and conciſe terms, that I ſhall not ſtand in need of any apology with the reader for preſenting him with his obſervations upon this occaſion, inſtead of my own.

'As for the uſual method of teaching arts, I
'deem it to be an old error of univerſities, not
'yet well recovered from the ſcholaſtic groſſneſs
'of barbarous ages, that inſtead of beginning
'with arts moſt eaſy, and thoſe be ſuch as are
'moſt obvious to the ſenſe, they preſent their
'young unmatriculated novices at firſt coming
'with the moſt intellective abſtractions of logic
'and metaphyſics: ſo that they having but new-
'left thoſe grammatic flats and ſhallows, where
'they ſtuck unreaſonably, to learn a few words,
'with lamentable conſtruction, and now on the
'ſudden tranſported under another climate, to be
'toſſed and turmoiled with their unballaſted wits
'in fathomleſs and unquiet deeps of controverſy,
'do for the moſt part grow into hatred and con-
'tempt of learning, mocked and deluded all this
'while with ragged notions and babblements,
'while they expected worthy and delightful
'knowlege; till poverty or youthful years call
'them importunately their ſeveral ways, and
'haſten them, with the ſway of friends, either
'to

'to an ambitious and mercenary, or ignorantly 'zealous divinity. Some allured to the trade of 'law, ground their purpoſes, not on the pru- 'dent and heavenly contemplation of juſtice and 'equity (which was never taught them) but on 'the promiſing and pleaſing thoughts of litigious 'terms, fat contentions, and flowing fees. Others 'betake them to ſtate affairs, with ſouls ſo un- 'principled in virtue, and true generous breed- 'ing, that flattery, and court ſhifts, and tyran- 'nous aphoriſms appear to them the higheſt 'points of wiſdom; inſtilling their barren hearts 'with a conſcientious ſlavery, if, as I rather think, 'it be not feigned. Others, laſtly, of a more 'delicious and airy ſpirit, retire themſelves, 'knowing no better, to the enjoyments of eaſe 'and luxury, living out their days in feaſt and 'jollity; which indeed is the wiſeſt and ſafeſt 'courſe of all theſe, unleſs they were with more 'integrity undertaken. And theſe are the fruits 'of miſpending our prime youth in theſe ſchools 'and univerſities as we do, either in learning 'meer words, or ſuch things chiefly as were 'better unlearnt.'

Mr. Locke, in delivering his ſentiments on the ſame ſubject, perfectly agrees with Milton. In ſpeaking of the education of a gentleman, he ſays, 'Since it cannot be hoped he ſhould have time 'and ſtrength to learn all things, moſt pains 'ſhould be taken about that which is moſt neceſ- 'ſary; and that principally looked after, which

'will

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'haſten them, with the ſway of friends, either

'to

'to an ambitious and mercenary, or ignorantly 'zealous divinity. Some allured to the trade of 'law, ground their purpoſes, not on the pru- 'dent and heavenly contemplation of juſtice and 'equity (which was never taught them) but on 'the promiſing and pleaſing thoughts of litigious 'terms, fat contentions, and flowing fees. Others 'betake them to ſtate affairs, with ſouls ſo un- 'principled in virtue, and true generous breed- 'ing, that flattery, and court ſhifts, and tyran- 'nous aphoriſms appear to them the higheſt 'points of wiſdom; inſtilling their barren hearts 'with a conſcientious ſlavery, if, as I rather think, 'it be not feigned. Others, laſtly, of a more 'delicious and airy ſpirit, retire themſelves, 'knowing no better, to the enjoyments of eaſe 'and luxury, living out their days in feaſt and 'jollity; which indeed is the wiſeſt and ſafeſt 'courſe of all theſe, unleſs they were with more 'integrity undertaken. And theſe are the fruits 'of miſpending our prime youth in theſe ſchools 'and univerſities as we do, either in learning 'meer words, or ſuch things chiefly as were 'better unlearnt.'

Mr. Locke, in delivering his ſentiments on the ſame ſubject, perfectly agrees with Milton. In ſpeaking of the education of a gentleman, he ſays, 'Since it cannot be hoped he ſhould have time 'and ſtrength to learn all things, moſt pains 'ſhould be taken about that which is moſt neceſ- 'ſary; and that principally looked after, which

'will

their early acquirements, of ſo many years pains and labour, are wholly obliterated. Is it not a lamentable thing to think that the prime of life hath thus been loſt, that a fertile ſoil hath thus been tilled, and manured, at great pains and coſt, and ſuch ſeed ſown as will never produce a valuable crop? Or is there reaſon to wonder, that the richneſs of the ſoil ſhould waſte itſelf in a luxuriance of weeds? Of the few, who, from a love to the arts in which they have been trained, would ſtill keep them alive in their memories, and diſplay their talents to the world, much the greater part ſerve only to increaſe the number of bad verſifiers, miſerable eſſay-writers, and minute philoſophers. The ſtudious and contemplative minds indeed may be furniſhed with matter to employ their leiſure hours in innocent amuſements, ſo that they may not be hurtful members of ſociety, however uſeleſs; and this perhaps is the greateſt benefit which the public derives from it. The divine, the lawyer, and the phyſician, may convert theſe rudiments of ſcience to their own advantage in their ſeveral profeſſions, but the gentleman, finding no immediate uſe for them, neglects, and of courſe ſoon forgets them. Thus the education of a gentleman, which is of all others the moſt important to the public, is not at all provided for. Were it defective in all other arts and profeſſions, tho' the grievance would be felt, it might be attended with no danger to the ſtate. But gentlemen, born to be legiſlators, to be the bulwarks of our conſtitution, to fill up poſts which

which require wiſdom conduct, and the moſt improved abilities, to animate and give motion to the whole body of the people, to be an example and model to all, the fountain of manners and ſource of principles; if their education be defective, or bad, the whole conſtitution is affected by it, the diſeaſe hath attacked the vitals, and muſt either be removed, or inevitable diſſolution muſt follow.

To remedy this, two eminent phyſicians have preſcribed very oppoſite courſes. The firſt ſtrikes at the root of the diſeaſe, which he would endeavour wholly to eradicate; but, as it was before obſerved, his medicines are too powerful in their operation, for the ſtrength of the patient's conſtitution. The other ſeems to think the caſe deſperate, and has therefore only directed a courſe of ſenitives, which may give eaſe to, and prolong the life of the patient, tho' not effect a cure. Milton's ſcheme ſeems better calculated for the times of the Spartan republic and old Rome, than for the preſent age: however beautiful it may look in theory, it would be found impracticable in the trial; or cou'd it be reduced to practice, it muſt neceſſarily change our form of government into a republic. Locke on the other ſide ſeems to deſpair of any effectual reformation in the public eſtabliſhed ſyſtem; he has therefore turned his whole thoughts towards private education. To this there are innumerable objections, but particularly in our conſtitution, as that method is the beſt calculated for deſpotic ſtates, and, if it became

came general, would be the ſureſt means to eſtabliſh arbitrary power; an evil of all others the moſt to be dreaded by a free people.

But ſure between theſe two extremes a medium may be found, which will effectually anſwer all the ends propoſed. Suppoſe, inſtead of a total ſubverſion, an attempt were made to correct the errors in the preſent ſyſtem, to ſupply ſome defects, and extend and enlarge the whole: perhaps, in purſuing this method, an eaſy and practicable plan might be ſtruck out, which would exceed all that have been hitherto eſtabliſhed in any part of the world.

The evils of our preſent mode of education do not ſo much ariſe from it's faults, as from it's defects; from what it doth, as from what it leaves undone; from it's imperfections ſo far as it goes, as from it's ſtopping ſhort at an improper time, when there is moſt occaſion for it's influence. The end ſeems to be forgot, and the means are the end. The rudiments of the arts are taught, as if they were deſireable only for their own ſakes, but their uſes for the purpoſes of life are never pointed out. Seneca in ſpeaking upon this ſubject, aſks, † 'For what reaſon is it that we train

† Quare ergo liberalibus ſtudiis filios erudimus? Non quia virtutem dare poſſunt; ſed quia animum ad accipiendam virtutem præparant; quemadmodum prima illa, ut antiqui vocabant, literatura, per quam pueris elementa traduntur, non docet liberales artes, ſed mox præcipiendis locum parat; ſic liberales artes non perducunt animum ad virtutem, ſed expediunt.

'our

'our children up in the ſtudy of the arts and ſci-
'ences? It is not becauſe they can inſpire virtue,
'but becauſe they prepare the mind for it's re-
'ception. Juſt as the rudiments of thoſe, from
'which boys learn their firſt principles, do not
'directly teach the liberal arts, but prepare the
'way for their reception, ſo the liberal arts them-
'ſelves do not directly lead the mind to virtue,
'but give the mind a right diſpoſition for it.'

Should a maſter, after having inſtructed his pupil in the rules of grammar, leave him to make his way thro' the claſſics, as well as he could, without aſſiſting him in his progreſs, and pointing out to him the uſe and application of thoſe rules as he went along, could he ever with reaſon expect to find him a good ſcholar? And ſhall leſs care and pains be thought ſufficient to make a good man? Is it eaſier, after having learned the rudiments of knowlege, and morality, for a man to guide himſelf right in the labyrinths of wiſdom, and ſteer, unpiloted, a ſteady courſe of virtue, through the ſhoals, the rocks, the quickſands of life, and, in a veſſel without ballaſt, ſtand the ſwelling tides of corruption, and the ſtorms of paſſion, than to underſtand a Greek or Roman author? And yet, abſurd as it may ſeem, ſuch is our practice. At the very juncture, when the uſes of all he has been reading ought to be pointed out to him with the utmoſt care and attention, in order to encourage him to go on in his courſe, to reap the fruit of his toils; at that moſt critical time of life, when the paſſions begin to be too

ſtrong

ſtrong for reaſon, even when guarded to the utmoſt, is a young gentleman left to himſelf without a guide, without aſſiſtance, to follow the bent of his inclinations. Is it any wonder that they ſhould lead him away from a dry and laborious courſe of ſtudy, in which he had ever proceeded with reluctance and diſguſt? Is it any wonder that they ſhould immediately plunge him into a gulph of pleaſure, from which he may never more emerge?

Is it not a fact, that, after the age of twenty or thereabouts, a gentleman, tho' ever ſo deſirous to finiſh his education, cannot find the means of doing it in England? And has not this reduced all parents, who wiſh to ſee their ſons accompliſhed, to the neceſſity of ſending them either to foreign academies, or to travel? Both which have been attended with the worſt conſequences. Thoſe academies are in countries which differ widely from ours both in religious and civil inſtitutions; nor will it appear improbable, that their principles in both may be much corrupted, when it is conſidered what little knowlege of their own religion and government they carry with them abroad. It is no wonder, when we reflect on the places where they paſs the firſt parts of their rational life, and the tutors from whom they receive the firſt knowlege of things inſtead of words, that ſo many ſhould return confirmed republicans. And ſo many others, captivated by the charms and outward appearances of the courts abroad, ſhould entertain too favourable notions

tions of monarchy. Their religion indeed will be in no great danger of being changed, as there is not much temptation to it; but as they carried but little abroad with them, there is a great hazard of their losing that little, and returning without any. And this perhaps may be found not the most unfruitful source of infidelity.

They who at that time of day are sent to travel are yet in a more deplorable situation. * 'To 'put them out of their parents view, at a great 'distance, under a governor, when they think 'themselves to be too much men to be governed 'by others, and yet have not prudence and ex- 'perience enough to govern themselves, what is 'it but to expose them to all the greatest dangers 'of their whole life, when they have the least 'fence or guard against them? Until that boiling 'boisterous part of life comes in, it may be hop- 'ed the tutor may have some authority: neither 'the stubbornness of age, nor the temptation or 'example of others, can take him from his tutor's 'conduct till fifteen or sixteen: but then, when 'he begins to consort himself with men, and 'thinks himself one; when he comes to relish, 'and pride himself in manly vices, and thinks it 'a shame to be any longer under the conduct and 'controul of another, what can be hoped from 'even the most careful and discreet governour, 'when neither he has power to compel, nor his 'pupil a disposition to be persuaded; but on the

* Locke.

'contrary

'contrary has the advice of warm blood, and pre-
'vailing faſhion, to hearken to the temptations
'of his companions, juſt as wiſe as himſelf, ra-
'ther than to the perſuaſions of his tutor, who is
'now looked on as the enemy to his freedom?
'And when is a man ſo like to miſcarry, as when
'at the ſame time he is both raw and unruly?

'This is the ſeaſon of all his life that moſt re-
'quires the eye and authority of his parents and
'friends to govern it. The flexibleneſs of the
'former part of a man's age, not yet grown up
'to be headſtrong, makes it more governable
'and ſafe; and in the after-part reaſon and fore-
'ſight begin a little to take place, and mind a
'man of his ſafety and improvement.'

If this picture be juſt, if this reaſoning be right, ſhall we have any cauſe to wonder at the merchandiſe thoſe young adventurers bring back? What indeed can be expected from them but an importation of all the follies, fopperies, vices, and luxuries of the ſeveral countries thro' which they have paſſed. Theſe are to be found in the ſtreets, and on the high-ways; and to be picked up riding poſt; but to collect valuable ſtores of knowlege, and to treaſure up wiſe obſervations, demands the ſkill and experience of more advanced years; it requires much longer reſidence, cloſe attention, and painful reſearches into places far from the common road, and vulgar haunts of men.

It is evident that there can be no greater evil than the ſending our youth abroad at ſo improper

and

and dangerous a ſeaſon. This evil ariſes from the ſad alternative of being either obliged to do ſo, or of entering them too ſoon at home into the buſineſs of life. One or the other muſt be done as things are now circumſtanced, or they muſt remain for ſome years in a ſtate of idleneſs and inaction. Yet for this the remedy is not hard to be found. But before I ſpeak to that point, it will be proper to take a more exact view of the previous part of education, as the finiſhing muſt in a great meaſure depend upon the preparation.

It has been ſaid before, that the evils of our preſent ſyſtem do not ſo much ariſe from it's faults, as from it's defects, from what it does, as from what it omits to do. Indeed there is nothing taught in our ſchools and univerſities either improper or unbecoming a gentleman to know; on the contrary, whatever he learns there, if it be properly applied, he will find both uſeful and ornamental to him in whatever ſituation of life he may afterwards be placed. That theſe inſtructions ſeldom or never anſwer this end, is owing partly to the manner in which they are given, and partly to an entire omiſſion or neglect of ſome ſtudies, which are eſſentially neceſſary to render the others uſeful, as well as ornamental.

In order to prove this, it will be neceſſary to lay down ſome principles relative to education, and then to try our ſyſtem by thoſe principles.

CHAP. III.

Of the principles upon which a ſyſtem of education ſhould be founded.

* 'THE laws of education are the firſt impreſſions we receive; and as they prepare us for civil life, each particular family ought to be governed purſuant to the plan of the great family which comprehends them all. If the people in general have a principle, their conſtituent parts, that is, the ſeveral families, will have one alſo.'

Hence it follows, that in every ſtate it ſhould be a fundamental maxim, firſt, that the education of youth ſhould be particularly formed and adapted to the nature and end of it's government. Secondly, that the principle by which the whole community is ſupported ought to be the moſt ſtrongly inculcated on the minds of every individual. Where theſe rules are not obſerved, no ſtate can flouriſh, or even ſubſiſt for any length of time. The beſt education upon any other principles may make good men, but it cannot make good citizens; it may make them virtuous and wiſe, but it cannot make them uſeful members of that particular ſociety.

Every kind of government hath it's nature, it's end, and it's principles. It's nature is it's particular conſtitution or conſtruction to anſwer ſome

* Spirit of laws.

end;

end; it's end is that which is ſought after by ſuch conſtitution; and it's principle is the means of compaſſing that end. From this view it is evident, that the principle is the moſt eſſential part; is the ſoul of government, which puts it into motion, which gives it life and action. The beſt conſtitution in the world, and framed to the beſt end, without a principle, is nothing but a name, and, without a right one, muſt neceſſarily be deſtroyed; for if the principle be wrong, a different end will be purſued than what was the object of it's inſtitution. It followeth alſo, that the principle ſhould be ſuited to the end, not only in it's nature, but in it's degree of power and ſtrength; for ſo far as it falleth ſhort of the end, ſo far is the government weak and defective.

The natural order of enquiry therefore will be, whether we have a principle, whether this principle be ſuited to the nature of our government, whether it be of force enough to anſwer the end, and whether this principle be ſufficiently inculcated by education.

CHAP. IV.

Of the different principles of the different governments known in the world.

ALL the different forms of government known in the world may be reduced to three ſpecies; the republican, monarchical, and deſpotic. To theſe the celebrated Monteſquieu has annexed

three principles. To the republican, virtue; to the monarchical, honour; to the deſpotic, fear. In the firſt and laſt of theſe he has inconteſtibly proved, that either theſe muſt be the principles, or the government could not ſubſiſt. But in what relates to the monarchical, he has not made uſe of that clearneſs and preciſion which appear ſo evidently in the reſt of his work. As he ſeems to have formed his idea of monarchy intirely from that, under which he was born, ſo he has laid down rules in general for it, from the particular practice of that ſtate. He hath accurately diſtinguiſhed between the two republican forms, the ariſtocracy and democracy, and the various manner in which the principle is to operate in thoſe different forms; nor was there leſs reaſon to diſtinguiſh between the different forms of monarchy, the leſs limited approaching to the deſpotic, and the more limited bordering upon the republican. It will not require much penetration to diſcover, that ſuch a monarchy as that of England cannot ſubſiſt upon his principle of honour. To convince an Engliſhman of this, there needs only to preſent him with part of the deſcription which he himſelf gives of the principle.

By the laws of honour he ſays, 'That the actions of men are not judged as good, but as ſhineing; not as juſt, but as great; not as reaſonable, but extraordinary.

'To this whimſical honour it is owing that the virtues are only juſt what it pleaſes, and as it pleaſes; it adds rules of it's own invention to every

'every thing preſcribed to us; it extends or li-
'mits our duties according to it's own fancy,
'whether they proceed from religion, politics,
'or morality. There is nothing ſo ſtrongly in-
'culcated in monarchies, by the laws, by reli-
'gion, and honour, as ſubmiſſion to the prince's
'will.'

What are the neceſſary conſequences of ſuch a principle? Monteſquieu himſelf has deſcribed them in glaring colours in another place. 'Am-
'bition joined to idleneſs, and baſeneſs to pride;
'a deſire of obtaining riches without labour,
'and an averſion to truth; flattery, treaſon, per-
'fidy, violation of engagements, contempt of
'civil duties, fear of the prince's virtue, hope
'from his weakneſs, but, above all, a perpetual
'ridicule caſt upon virtue.'

Far, far from Britain be for ever kept this blaſting principle, and may our enemies, whilſt they continue ſuch, cheriſh it in their boſoms.

As the profeſſed intention of this author, was to treat accurately of all the various governments known in the world, and their ſeveral principles, it is evident that he has been defective in the execution of one part of his deſign. For tho' from his own deſcriptions he found that our form of government would not come exactly under any of the heads into which he diſtinguiſhed them; tho' he has allotted a ſeparate chapter to treat of our conſtitution as a diſtinct ſpecies from any other; yet he has not thought proper to ſay one ſyllable about the principle, by which it may be preſerved,

but has contented himſelf with foretelling the means by which it may be deſtroyed. Whether this was the effect of negligence or deſign, or whether he durſt not deliver his ſentiments freely upon that head, from the reſtraints of policy and religion, muſt be left to conjecture.

CHAP. V.

That our conſtitution can not be ſupported by any of theſe three principles, tho' they may be all uſeful to it.

AS our conſtitution is made up of a due mixture of the three ſpecies of government, being partly monarchical, partly republican, and partly abſolute, from the union of thoſe two, it follows that no particular principle belonging to any of thoſe will be ſufficient to anſwer it's end. But all the three may be employed in it to advantage.

The bulk of the people ſhould be bred up to fear the laws, which ſhould be conſidered as veſted with deſpotic power. The legiſlative or republican part ſhould have virtue for it's object, and the principle of honour may be employed by the executive or royal authority with ſucceſs. By honour I do not mean here that baſtard kind deſcribed above, (which was ſubſtituted by princes really poſſeſſed of deſpotic power, tho' maſked under the title of monarchy, in the room of fear) as a more uſeful and active inſtrument to promote their

their ambitious views) but that genuine and refined ſort, ariſing from a love of fame, and the rewards attending it; which often ſtood in the place of virtue in republics.

CHAP. VI.

The neceſſity of another principle to regulate theſe.

WHEN three different principles act in one ſtate, in which there is no ſubordination, or neceſſary dependance of one on the other, as it would be extreamly difficult to confine them within their due bounds, ſo as that no one ſhould become predominant; and as ſuch a predominance of any one of theſe over the other muſt neceſſarily bring about a change in the conſtitution, it were to be wiſhed that a principle of ſuperior force to any of theſe could be found out, whoſe office it ſhould be to preſerve the balance between the others, to reſtrain them within their due limits, and confine them to their proper objects. Nor have we far to ſeek for ſuch a principle. It can be no other than RELIGION.

To the great power and energy of this principle Monteſquieu himſelf has borne teſtimony; for tho' he has never mentioned it as a neceſſary one to any of the forms of government which he treats of, yet he occaſionally ſays in a part of his work, not profeſſedly upon that point, that 'The principles of chriſtianity deeply engraved on the 'heart would be infinitely more powerful than

'the falſe honour of monarchies, than the hu-
'mane virtues of republics, or the ſervile fear
'of deſpotic ſtates.'

Hence it is evident he thought that the princi-
ple of true religion was much ſtronger than the
force of all the others together; and conſequent-
ly that a ſtate founded upon this principle muſt be
fixed upon the moſt ſolid and durable baſis. Hence
alſo we may trace the reaſon of his ſilence upon
that head in treating of the Britiſh conſtitution;
for as he clearly ſaw that it could be ſupported by
no other principle but that of religion, and that
the religion muſt be ſuited to the nature of our go-
vernment, he muſt of neceſſity have given the
preference to it in it's reformed ſtate, and this
would have been a point of too much danger for
a ſubject of France, and a Roman catholic by
profeſſion, to meddle with. This conjecture ap-
pears the more probable, when we ſee that this
important article ſeems accidentally and careleſsly
dropped into a chapter, whoſe title is, 'Another
'of Mr. Bayle's paradoxes.'

CHAP. VII.

Of the power and extent of this principle.

AS the different parts of which our conſtitu-
tion is compoſed of courſe introduced dif-
ferent principles, the ſame policy, which pointed
out the neceſſity of a head to govern the whole
ſtate, ſhewed alſo the neceſſity of a regulating
principle;

principle; and the ſame analogy will diſcover to us, that the power of this principle over the others ſhould be of the ſame nature and extent as the power of the monarch over the different members of which the ſtate is compoſed. It ſhould be rather coercive, than active; rather direct, than govern; reſtrain, than impel. Whilſt it pretends to no more, it will give no umbrage to a free people; and the three principles of virtue, fear, and honour, may be all exerciſed with more force and advantage under the guidance and influence of ſuch a principle, as they will be confined to due bounds, and directed to proper ends. From all which it manifeſtly appears, that this principle above all others ſhould be chiefly inculcated by education.

CHAP. VIII.

Of the principle of virtue.

IT is eaſy to ſee that virtue, in point of order, dignity, and uſe, is the foremoſt of the three other principles. It is alſo evident, that it is moſt ſuited to the nature of our government, in as much as that partakes more of the republican than any other form. If therefore we want to know how to cultivate this noble and neceſſary principle, let us look into the methods practiſed by thoſe antient and wiſe republics of Greece, and Rome, where it flouriſhed in it's higheſt degree. This enquiry alſo may perhaps lead us into the beſt

manner of propagating religion too; for virtue and religion are nearly allied, they give and receive mutual aids, and the one naturally prepares the mind for the other.

CHAP. IX.

The methods taken in antient education to promote and encourage virtue.

THE great republics of Athens and Rome, like us, had liberty for their object. Liberty could not exiſt without virtue, nor be preſerved without wiſdom. Knowlege of all human affairs joyned with virtue was neceſſary to the internal polity, order, and tranquillity of the ſtate: fortitude, the reſult of virtue, joined with policy, was neceſſary to preſerve it from external violence. Nor was the mere poſſeſſion of wiſdom and knowlege ſufficient in their ſtateſmen, no more than courage without ſkill in their citizens. As their counſels were the reſult of public debates, wiſdom and policy, to have their due effects, muſt be diſplayed and communicated to others; the wiſeſt councellor in ſuch a ſtate, without a power and facility of delivering his ſentiments, could be of little uſe to the public. Such communication could be made no other way but by language; a complete knowlege of that was therefore abſolutely neceſſary. But as the mere communication alone might not always produce the effect of bringing others into the ſame way of thinking,

thinking, it was neceſſary that this communication ſhould be made in a clear and forcible manner, ſo as to enlighten the underſtanding, and to make ſtrong impreſſions on the hearts of the hearers. To do this, it was neceſſary that their thoughts and words ſhould be ranged in due order, and the whole delivered with proper tones and geſtures. Or, in other words, the art of oratory was eſſential to thoſe who ſpoke in public. Hence we may trace the principles upon which their ſyſtem of education was built. Their end was liberty; liberty could not ſubſiſt without virtue, nor be maintained without wiſdom and knowlege; and wiſdom and knowlege, unleſs communicated with force and perſpicuity, were uſeleſs to the ſtate. But as virtue is a painful renunciation of all ſelfiſh paſſions, and as wiſdom and knowlege with the art of perſuaſion are the effects of a laborious ſtudy, application, and practice, it was neceſſary that men ſhould be encouraged by rewards, and aſſiſted by inſtruction in thoſe difficult purſuits. Accordingly we find, that in the education of their youth, after having taken care to inſtil ſtrongly the principle of virtue, their chief attention was to inſtruct them in the moſt accurate knowlege of their own language, and to train them from their childhood in the practice of oratory, as the ſure means to preferment in the ſtate.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

The ſtudy of oratory neceſſary to us in every point where it was ſo to the antients.

THERE is not one point in which this art was neceſſary or uſeful to the antients, wherein it is not equally ſo to us. ‡ Nor was there any incitement to the ſtudy of it, either of pleaſure, profit, or honour, which is not equally ſtrong with us. That the uſes are the ſame in all points common to us with them, may be ſeen by only looking over the following elegant and ſummary view of them drawn up by Cicero.

'‖ Nothing ſeems to me to be more truly excellent, than to be able by the powers of oratory

‡ Erant autem huic ſtudio maxima, quæ nunc quoque ſunt, propoſita præmia, vel ad gratiam, vel ad opes, vel ad dignitatem. Ac ne illud quidem vere dici poteſt, aut plures, cæteris artibus inſervire, aut majore delectatione, aut ſpe uberiore, aut præmiis ad perdiſcendum amplioribus, commoveri. Cic. de orat. lib. i.

‖ Neque vero mihi quidquam præſtabilius videtur, quam poſſe dicendo tenere hominum cœtus, mentes allicere, voluntates impellere, quo velit, unde autem velit, deducere. Hæc una res in omni libero populo, maximeque in pacatis tranquilliſque civitatibus, præcipue ſemper floruit, ſemperque dominata eſt.

Quid enim eſt aut tam admirabile, quam ex infinita multitudine hominum exiſtere unum, qui id, quod omnibus natura ſit datum, vel ſolus, vel cum paucis facere poſſit? Aut tam jucundum cognitu, atque audi-

tu,

'ry to engage the attention of public aſſemblies,
'to win their good opinion, to drive their paſſions
'where you like, and bring them back at plea-
'ſure. This art alone has ever flouriſhed, and
'bore the greateſt ſway in all free ſtates, eſpeci-
'ally in times of peace and tranquillity.

'For what can ſo juſtly excite our admiration,
'as that one man in a million ſhould either alone,
'or at leaſt with but few others, be able to do
'that which nature ſeems to have put into the
'power of all men? What can give ſuch plea-
'ſure both to our hearing and underſtanding, as
'a polite and elegant oration, filled with ſenti-
'ments of wiſdom, and expreſſions of dignity?

tu, quam ſapientibus ſententiis gravibuſque verbis ornata oratio, & perpolita? Aut tam potens, tamque magnificum, quam populi motus, judicum religiones, ſenatus gravitatem, unius oratione converti?

Quid porro tam regium, tam liberale, tam munificum, quam opem ferre ſupplicibus, excitare afflictos, dare ſalutem, liberare periculis, retinere homines in civitate? Quid autem tam neſſarium quam tenere ſemper arma, quibus vel tectus ipſe eſſe poſſis, vel provocare improbos, vel te ulciſci laceſſitus? Age vero, ne ſemper forum, ſubſellia, roſtra, curiamque meditere, quid eſſe poteſt in otio aut jucundius, aut magis proprium humanitatis, quam ſermo facetus ac nulla in re rudis? Hoc enim uno præſtamus vel maxime feris, quod colloquimur inter nos, & quod exprimere dicendo ſenſa poſſumus. Quamobrem quis hoc non jure miretur, ſummeque in eo elaborandum eſſe arbitretur, ut, quo uno homines maxime beſtiis præſtent, in hoc hominibus ipſis antecellat? Cic. de orat. lib. 1.

'What

'What can be an inſtance of ſuch real power and 'magnificence, as that popular commotions, the 'ſacred opinions of judges, and the majeſty of ſe- 'nates, ſhould be ſwayed by the oratory of one 'ſingle perſon.

'Beſides, what ſo noble, ſo generous, ſo roy- 'al, as to relieve the ſuppliant, to raiſe the af- 'flicted, to be the diſpenſer of ſafety, the deli- 'verer from danger, and the means of preſerve- 'ing it's members to a community? What ſo 'neceſſary as always to be prepared with arms, 'by which you may defend yourſelf, ſet your 'enemies at defiance, or take vengeance when 'provoked? But farther, that we may not always 'confine this point to the forum, the bench, the 'roſtrum, or the ſenate-houſe, what in the re- 'tirements of private life can give more delight, 'or more properly belong to civilized humanity, 'than pleaſant and poliſhed diſcourſe free from 'all marks of ruſticity? For in this alone conſiſts 'our chief pre-eminence over brute-beaſts, that 'we can converſe together, and by ſpeech ex- 'preſs the ſentiments of our minds.

'Who then ſhall not think this an object juſtly 'worth his admiration, and deſerving his ſever- 'eſt labours, to be able in that very circumſtance, 'by which men excel other animals, to excel all 'other men?'

We as well as they have councils, ſenates, and aſſemblies of the people [by their repreſentatives] where matters of as great moment are deliberated,

ed, debated on, and concluded; where eloquence and oratory have as ample fields in which to diſplay themſelves, and where the * rewards and honours paid to them are equal. Nor is oratory leſs neceſſary to us at the bar than it was to them, tho' it's mode may be ſomewhat altered by the difference of our conſtitution, and it's powers confined in narrower limits.

To expatiate upon theſe topics would be only loſs of time, as the point muſt be obvious to the moſt common diſcernment.

CHAP. XI.

That there is one point in which the ſtudy of oratory is eſſentially neceſſary to us, but was not at all ſo to the antients.

THE article I mean is of the utmoſt importance to us; it is the baſis of our conſtitution and pillar of our ſtate; it is that which gives our's the greateſt advantage over all other forms of government, by furniſhing it with the moſt ſuitable means to anſwer it's end; it is in ſhort that regulating principle, which I have before ſpoken of, ſo eſſentially neceſſary to the preſerva-

* If we look into the hiſtory of England ſince the reformation, we ſhall find that moſt perſons have made their way to the head of affairs, and got into the higheſt employments, not by birth or fortune, but by being what is called good ſpeakers.

tion

tion to our conſtitution, religion. As the religion of the antients conſiſted chiefly in rites and ceremonies it could derive no aſſiſtance from oratory; but there is not the ſmalleſt branch of ours which can be well executed without ſkill in ſpeaking, and the more important parts, calculated to anſwer the great ends, evidently require the whole oratorial powers. But before I enlarge upon the means by which it may be preſerved, it will not be improper in theſe days, wherein religion is fallen into ſuch contempt, to prove the abſolute neceſſity of the principle itſelf to the preſervation of the ſtate. In order to do this I ſhall endeavour, firſt, to ſhew, that tho' virtue might have been a ſufficient principle to have ſupported the antient republics, yet that it could not be ſufficient to ſupport our form of government, notwithſtanding it be equally neceſſary to it. Secondly, that the cauſe of the failure and decay of the principle of virtue in thoſe ſtates, was, that the means to ſupport it were inadequate, and that thoſe means, or any indeed of human invention, muſt be of infinitely leſs efficacy with us than with them. Thirdly, that from the nature of our ſituation, and the peculiarity of our circumſtances, nothing could poſſibly make us or continue us a great and flouriſhing people, but an immediate revelation of the divine will, and a perfect obedience paid on our part to that will ſo revealed. Fourthly, that the means made uſe of by the antients to ſupport their principle of virtue, tho' found inſufficient and in-

adequate

adequate to that end, yet would be found forcible enough and abundantly effectual to preſerve our principle of religion.

CHAP. XII.

Tho' virtue might have been a ſufficient principle to have ſupported the antient republics, yet it would not be ſufficient to ſupport our form of government, notwithſtanding it be equally neceſſary to it.

WHOEVER hath a mind to be convinced of the abſolute neceſſity of virtue to a republican form of government, inſomuch that it cannot poſſibly ſubſiſt without it, may ſee the point undeniably proved by Monteſquieu in his Spirit of laws. He will alſo find it evidently ſhewn, that liberty cannot exiſt without virtue, whence he may deduce the neceſſity of it alſo to our conſtitution. That it was a ſufficient principle to anſwer all the ends of a republican ſtate, the experience of ages has fully ſhewn. For all the great republics were ſtrong and flouriſhed whilſt that principle remained in it's vigour; as that grew weak, they declined; and, with the total corruption of it, were deſtroyed. So that their ruin was not occaſioned by any defect in the principle itſelf, but by the corruption of it, thro' the neglect or want of proper means to ſupport it. Theſe were found too weak to oppoſe luxury, which like a mighty torrent always overturned

and

and carried all before it. By that Athens fell, by that Rome periſhed.

——— *Sævior armis*
Luxuria incubuit, victumque ulciſcitur orbem.

In the Spartan commonwealth the mighty power of this principle of virtue was ſhewn in it's greateſt height. For as it's deadlieſt foe, luxury, had been baniſhed by the inſtitutions of Lycurgus, it laſted with little or no alteration for more than 700 years. And at the time when there ſeemed to be a general combination againſt the freedom of mankind; when luxury and tyranny went hand in hand over the face of the earth; in that little ſtate the ſacred flame of liberty was ſtill preſerved: there ſhe had ſtill an aſylum, and, ſupported by virtue, ſeemed to defy the united endeavours of mankind. Tho' often conquered, tho' often thrown to earth, by the ſuperior force of their antagoniſts, yet like Antæus they aroſe again freſh and vigorous thro' the divine energy of their principle. 'Till their enemies, deſpairing of ever being able to ſubdue their ſtate whilſt their virtue remained, found it neceſſary to pave the way for luxury by altering the inſtitutions of Lycurgus, and changing their mode of education. This ſoon effected what the force of arms could never have done, and in a ſhort time they were no longer a people.

However powerful this principle may be, however equal to anſwer all the ends of republican governments,

governments, it would be far from being ſufficient to our purpoſe. From the nature of their inſtitution, that muſt be their ſole ruling principle, nor could it have any other to contend with, except what aroſe from the ambition of private men. It had no occaſion for controul or reſtraint, ſince even it's exceſs could not be hurtful to the ſtate.

But in the very groundwork of our conſtitution are ſown the ſeeds of other principles. A monarch has not neceſſarily virtue for his object: the increaſe of his power may perhaps be a more natural aim. A nobility may have in view the enlargement of their property, and addition to their honours, and the increaſe of kingly power may by them be conſidered as the ſhorteſt road to theſe. To guard againſt their encroachments will be the buſineſs of virtue in the repreſentatives of the people. But then this virtue muſt be confined within due bounds, for ſhould it run into exceſs, it would as neceſſarily overturn the conſtitution as ſucceſsful ambition in the others *. As in the one caſe our ſtate would become wholly monarchical, ſo in the other it muſt of courſe be republican. Hence we may deduce the neceſſity of a principle ſuperior to virtue, to regulate it's motions, and confine it within proper limits. As man is to be controuled by man, ſo muſt principle by principle. For ſhould we entruſt the power of regulating or eſtabliſhing principles to man, we at the ſame time give him power to

* Vide reign of Charles I.

modify

modify them as he pleaſes, or to deſtroy them; and conſequently furniſh him with the means of tyranizing.

CHAP. XIII.

That the cauſe of the failure and decay of the principle in thoſe was, that the means to ſupport it were inadequate, and that thoſe means, or indeed any of human invention, muſt be of infinitely leſs efficacy with us than with them.

THE means uſed by the antients to ſupport virtue were education, oratory, and reward. By the firſt, proper and early notions of it were inſtilled before the mind was capable of judging. By the ſecond, thoſe notions were confirmed and eſtabliſhed in the moſt forcible manner, which at once informed the underſtanding, and wrought upon the paſſions of mankind. By the laſt, men were allured and excited to reduce theſe notions to practice, both for their own benefit and that of ſociety. As the laſt therefore was the great mover to action, it is evident, that the efficacy of the former depended upon that. Whilſt therefore reward was the neceſſary attendant on virtue, virtue of courſe was the chief object of education, and the chief point inculcated by oratory; but ſhould reward change it's object, and ſhould vice lead to it inſtead of virtue, it is eaſy to ſee, that there would be a change in the road alſo.

Whilſt

Whilſt republics preſerved their principle, virtue was neceſſarily the firſt object in education. Oratory, as the means of diſplaying virtue in it's brighteſt colours, and imprinting it ſtrongly on the minds of others, was of courſe ſtudied, and rewards were the natural reſult of virtue and improved talents. For the whole power of reward lying in the people, whilſt they were taught to believe, that the good and ſafety of each individual depended upon the good and ſafety of the whole, they naturally, to the beſt of their judgments, conferred rewards on the moſt deſerving, on ſuch as were beſt able to ſupport the republic. But, when their principle was corrupted, when luxury deſtroyed public ſpirit, and favoured ſelfiſh gratifications, rewards were then diſtributed, not from views of public good, but to anſwer private ends; the moſt corrupt men were choſen into places of power by corrupt voters; the means to thrive in the world were the ends ſought after by education, and oratory was proſtituted to anſwer the ſame purpoſes. But in our conſtitution, as the power of reward lies principally in the monarch and his miniſters, it is evident enough that he can give what bias he pleaſes to education. If his view be to extend his power, he will hardly ſuffer virtue to be it's object, nor will he care to have the youth exerciſed and made ſkilful in the uſe of ſo dangerous a weapon as oratory. From the very nature of our government indeed the incitements to virtue cannot be ſo great as in republics. There the field is open to all candi-

dates,

dates, and the ſpirits of a man are ſupported, and animated in his fatiguing purſuits, by the moral certainty of the ſucceſs which will attend his labours. Whereas with us the avenues are barred to many of perhaps the beſt talents, and brighteſt accompliſhments; and the reward depending upon the will and pleaſure of one or a few, who may not be either the moſt ſkilful, or uncorrupt, induſtry of courſe flags, and merit drops it's wing.

We ſhould have but few artiſts finiſh their pieces with care and exactneſs, whoſe value was to be ſettled by the throwing of dice, by the deciſion of corrupt, or the caprice of ignorant judges.

Hence it is manifeſt that the means of ſupporting virtue are much weaker with us than with the antients; if therefore it be proved that the cauſes of it's deſtruction are much ſtronger with us than with them, how abſurd muſt it appear to think of eſtabliſhing that as our principle, which it is impoſſible for us to ſupport.

The great cauſe of the deſtruction of virtue amongſt the antients was luxury; but it was not the native growth of their ſoil. It was tranſplanted from other climes, was a long time before it grew to any height, and might eaſily have been checked and kept low. It is true, at different times, from different conqueſts, ſudden torrents of wealth poured in upon them, which filled the channels of luxury, and threatened danger to the land: but it required only a little reſolution and ſteadineſs to oppoſe their firſt violence, and their force

force would ſoon ſpend itſelf. Sumptuary laws and the office of cenſor properly executed were ſufficient to guard the ſtate from any very dangerous conſequences, had it not been for the ambition of private men, whoſe intereſt it was to propagate corruption. But when we take a view of the ſituation of our country, that it is an iſland, that it muſt of courſe owe it's ſplendor and power intirely to commerce, not to conqueſt; that commerce produces wealth, and wealth of neceſſity introduces luxury; we ſee, that with the ſeeds of our conſtitution are ſown the ſeeds of it's corruption, that both muſt grow up together, and unleſs proper care be taken the weeds muſt choak the grain. Wealth flows not in upon us by ſudden guſhes and mountainy floods after rain or ſhowers, it has an inexhauſtible ſource, from which flows a regular conſtant river, that grows wider and deeper as it advances; but as it has no boundleſs ocean to loſe itſelf in, as it terminates in the central pool of luxury, the whole land muſt in time be deluged, if conſtant care be not taken to prevent it.

The Dutch have not more cauſe to be watchful over their dykes as they ſee the ſea gaining upon them, than we have to guard our bulwarks againſt the increaſing tide of corruption. Luxury is not only arrived at a greater pitch, and become more general than it formerly was, but it muſt daily receive new additions from our connections with the eaſtern and weſtern Indies. The power of

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our enemy hath been much increaſed, which hath rendered it's attacks more formidable and hard to be reſiſted. Not greater additional force hath been given to military engines by the invention of gunpowder, than to the aſſaults of luxury by our commercial diſcoveries. And what bulwarks have we to guard us, what weapons to defend us againſt it's attacks? Monarchs, and favourers of monarchy, will hardly promote ſumptuary laws, or eſtabliſh the office of cenſor. In this reſpect our conſtitution is as naked and void of ſtrong holds, and fortified places, as our country, when an enemy has once got footing in it. In both caſes there is no other reſource but in the virtue and valour of the people.

If then the antients were not able to ſupport virtue when their means were ſo much greater, againſt the attacks of luxury when it's force was ſo much leſs, how ſhall we hope to do it, when the means to ſupport virtue are ſo much leſs, and the force of luxury ſo much increaſed?

Perhaps it may be ſaid, that, tho' virtue be loſt, vice may be reſtrained, and that the power of the laws, and puniſhments, may be ſufficient to check it's progreſs. Suppoſe this were granted, yet it muſt neceſſarily be at the expence of our liberty. The principle of deſpotic government is fear, and the means to ſupport that principle are puniſhments. The more therefore we eſtabliſh that principle, and the more we rely upon thoſe means, the nearer do we approach to a ſtate of ſlavery. Hear what Monteſquieu ſays upon this ſubject. 'It is

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'a perpetual remark of the Chineſe authors, that 'the more the puniſhments of criminals were in-'creaſed, in their empire, the nearer they were 'to a revolution. This is becauſe puniſhments 'were augmented in proportion as the public mo-'rals were corrupted.

'It would be an eaſy matter to prove, that in 'all, or almoſt all the governments of Europe, 'puniſhments have increaſed or diminiſhed in 'proportion as thoſe governments favoured or 'diſcouraged liberty. *

In

* Spirit of laws, vol. i. b. vi. ch. 9.

In proportion as luxury gains ground in a republic, the minds of the people are turned towards their particular intereſts. Thoſe who are allowed only what is neceſſary have nothing to wiſh for but their own and their country's glory; but a ſoul depraved by luxury has many other deſires, and ſoon becomes an enemy to the laws that confine it.

No ſooner were the Romans corrupted, than their deſires became boundleſs and immenſe.

When the whole world, impelled by the force of a general corruption, is immerſed in voluptuouſneſs, what muſt then become of virtue?

Spirit of laws, vol. i. b. vii. ch. 2.

When virtue is baniſhed, ambition invades the hearts of thoſe who are diſpoſed to receive it; and avarice poſſeſſes the whole community. The deſires now change their objects; what they were fond of before becomes indifferent; they were free, while under the reſtraint of laws, they will now be free to act againſt law; and as every citizen is like a ſlave eſcaped from his maſter's houſe, what was a maxim of equity they

In another place he ſays; * 'Men muſt not be 'led by exceſs of violence; we ought to make a 'prudent uſe of the means which nature has gi-'ven us to conduct them. If we enquire into the 'cauſe of all human corruptions, we ſhall find 'that they proceed from the impunity of crimes, 'and not from the moderation of puniſhments.'

It will follow therefore, † 'that in moderate 'governments a good legiſlator is leſs bent upon 'puniſhing, than preventing crimes; he is more 'attentive to inſpire good morals, than to inflict 'puniſhments.'

‡ 'But it often happens that a legiſlator, de-'ſirous of reforming an evil, thinks of nothing 'but of this reformation; his eyes are open only 'to this object, and ſhut to it's inconveniencies. 'When the evil is redreſſed, there is nothing 'ſeen but the ſeverity of the legiſlator; yet there 'will remain an evil in the ſtate that hath ſprung 'from this ſeverity; the minds of the people are

call rigour; what was a rule of action they call conſtraint; and to precaution they give the name of fear. Frugality, and not the thirſt of gain, now paſſes for avarice. Formerly the wealth of individuals conſtituted the public treaſure; but now the public treaſure is become the patrimony of private perſons. The members of the commonwealth riot on the public ſpoils, and it's ſtrength is only the power of ſome citizens, and the licentiouſneſs of the whole community. Ibid. b. iii. ch. 3.

* Book vi. ch. 12. † Ch. 9. ‡ Ch. 12.

'corrupted

'corrupted, and become habituated to deſpotic 'power.'

It would therefore be but a bad omen if we ſaw the legiſlature relying wholly upon puniſhments for the preſervation of morals: for either the means would not be effectual, or, if effectual, we muſt ſoon change our freedom for ſlavery. One of the two following caſes mentioned by Monteſquieu muſt inevitably be our lot.* 'There 'are two ſorts of corruption; one, when the peo-'ple do not obſerve the laws; the other, when 'they are corrupted by the laws; an incurable 'evil, becauſe it is in the very remedy itſelf.'

The antients knew the force and neceſſity of the principle of fear, but they alſo knew how to make a right uſe of it. As only the few were to be allured to virtue by reward, the bulk of the people could be kept from vice by nothing but puniſhment. But as puniſhment acts by fear, and the direct tendency of fear is to depreſs the ſpirits, and check that nobility of ſoul which alone could ſupport a free republic, they uſed it with a ſparing hand. Penal laws with them were few, and their puniſhments of the lighteſt kind. But tho' the fear of man, or any thing belonging to him, or his inſtitutions, might debaſe man, yet the fear of the gods, as ſuperior beings, and a reverence to their commands, could be no degradation to human nature.' Hence we ſee that the direct intent of their laws was to promote

* Ch. 12.

virtue, and to engage the obedience of their citizens to them by reward; whilſt vice was diſcouraged by a dread of puniſhment from the gods, and an hatred to it inculcated chiefly by the laws of religion. Thus had they the full uſe of this principle without any of it's ill effects. Religious awe depreſſes not the ſoul, on the contrary it invigorates it in the cauſe of virtue, and the operation of fear muſt be infinitely more powerful, when it's object is a ſuperior being, the effects of whoſe diſpleaſure are unavoidable by us, than when it's object is mere man or his laws, which force may reſiſt, or cunning may evade. Accordingly we find that a greater purity of morals was preſerved, and fewer crimes committed in thoſe ſtates, under the influence of this religious ſenſe, than in any of thoſe countries which depended upon the ſeverity of their laws, and the rigour of their puniſhments.

But as their religion was merely of human inſtitution, and it's whole force depended upon the belief of the contrary, it was no difficult matter to overturn it. The groſs abſurdities with which it was filled were ſufficient to deſtroy it's credibility, whenever the eyes of the people were opened. It did not require much pains to perſuade men that a thing was falſe, which they wiſhed to be ſo: or to free them from the fetters of prejudice, when their paſſions were too ſtrong for reſtraint. As they had not any juſt notions of a future ſtate, the obſervation of the unequal diſtribution of rewards and puniſhments in this life would

would ſoon deſtroy all truſt in providence, and make man alone the object of their hopes and fears; and when the leaders, who knew it to be nothing but a political ſcheme, found it their intereſt to pull off the maſk, and to act againſt it's precepts, their example was ſoon followed by the multitude. No great labour was required to make them pull down altars raiſed to men, and to break in pieces like potters clay, and trample under foot, the gods of their own making. Thus virtue, morals, and religion, were all borne away by the irreſiſtible tide of corruption.

CHAP. XIV.

That from the nature of our ſituation and the peculiarity of our circumſtances, nothing could poſſibly make us, or continue us a great flouriſhing people, but an immediate revelation from God.

IT will be granted, that without liberty we can not either be a great or a flouriſhing people. It will be granted, that liberty cannot ſubſiſt without virtue, and it has been proved by the experience of all ages and countries, that virtue is neceſſarily deſtroyed by luxury. It has been ſhewn that all human means to preſerve virtue are weaker and fewer with us, and the cauſes which introduce and promote luxury more certain and more powerful, both in degree and number, than in any other free country. It will therefore neceſſarily follow, that we have leſs

probability of preſerving our liberty, by any means hitherto practiſed, and that it's duration muſt of courſe be ſhorter, than in any of thoſe ſtates where it once flouriſhed, and was afterwards deſtroyed. When it is conſidered that liberty, and conſequently virtue, is abſolutely neceſſary to our well being; and that riches, and conſequently luxury, muſt unavoidably flow in upon us from the nature of our ſituation; that theſe two are utterly incompatible, and that the one muſt neceſſarily deſtroy the other; that either to get rid of our luxury we muſt part with our wealth, without which we can not be a flouriſhing people, or defend ourſelves againſt the power of our enemies; or, if our luxury remains, we muſt part with our virtue, and conſequently our liberty, which would render us ſtill leſs flouriſhing and leſs powerful; the preſervation of ſuch a ſtate ſeems to be beyond the power of all human means, and can be effected by nothing but divine interpoſition.

In a ſtate ſo circumſtanced nothing can poſſibly engage men in the painful and ſelf-denying practice of virtue, in ſpite of the conſtant temptations in their way, but the certainty of a ſuitable reward; and nothing can deter them from vice, when ſtimulated and inflamed by paſſions, but unavoidable puniſhments adequate to their crimes. This can not be on earth, where man is to be the judge; it muſt therefore be in a future ſtate, and the office belong to God alone, the ſearcher of

of hearts. But as the light of nature and unaſſiſted reaſon could never diſcover this with a ſufficient degree of certainty to make it a principle of action, it was neceſſary that it ſhould come to us by an immediate revelation from God. To give this force, it was not ſufficient to know that there would be a future ſtate, in which rewards and puniſhments would be diſtributed; it was neceſſary alſo that a ſyſtem of laws ſhould be promulged for our conduct in life, the obſervance or breach of which ſhould entitle us to reward, or ſubject us to puniſhment. To enforce the obſervation of theſe laws, it was alſo neceſſary that they ſhould be believed to come from God himſelf.

I ſhall not attempt to enter upon ſo beaten a topic as the proof of the authenticity of our holy religion. This has employed the pens of many who have never been excelled in clearneſs of underſtanding, ſolidity of judgment, and depth of penetration; ſo that probably nothing new can be ſaid upon that head. I ſhall content myſelf with ſhewing, that if ever a divine revelation was neceſſary to man, it was more particularly ſo to the Britiſh nation, than to any other upon earth: that it was impoſſible, without ſuch a revelation, we ſhould ever be, or continue to be, a great and flouriſhing people: and that the ſyſtem now nominally eſtabliſhed amongſt us as the revealed will of God, were it really believed to be ſuch univerſally, and accordingly practiſed, would raiſe us above all other nations that either do, or ever did exiſt upon earth, and preſerve us unalter-

ably ſuch to the end of time, provided that ſyſtem continued to retain it's due influence.

It was a maxim of Tully's, 'That it is impoſſible for thoſe who have no belief of the immortality of the ſoul, or a future ſtate of rewards and puniſhments, to ſacrifice their particular intereſts and paſſions to the public good, or to have a generous concern for poſterity.' And the moſt enlightened of the heathens, the almoſt inſpired Plato, has delivered it as his opinion, that 'concerning thoſe great duties which men's appetites and paſſions render difficult, it ſhould ſeem rather the work of God to provide, than of human legiſlators, if it were poſſible to hope for a ſyſtem of laws framed and promulged by God himſelf.'

Here we ſee how neceſſary the wiſeſt of the heathens judged ſuch a revelation to be, could it have been hoped for. And if he thought ſo in his days, how much more neceſſary ought we to think it in the preſent times? In the antient free ſtates, there aroſe from the nature of their conſtitution a principle ſufficient to preſerve them. God had done his part by them; he had furniſhed them with proper means for their ſecurity, and if they ſuffered them to fail in their hands, it was their fault. But whoever examines the conſtitution of Great Britain, will find that from it's nature it had no principle; and conſidering the diſcordant and jarring parts of which it is compoſed, it muſt neceſſarily fall to pieces in a ſhort time, unleſs they were cemented by religion. To them

them therefore ſuch a revelation was more abſolutely neceſſary than to any other nation.

When it is conſidered that Great Britain is particularly circumſtanced in regard to any other country that ever made a figure in the world, and that in order to be conſpicuous ſhe muſt have other principles than what the wit of man has ever yet diſcovered, would it not be a ſtrong preſumptive proof in favour of their divine original, ſhould ſuch principles be provided for her without her ſeeking, at a time when ſhe had moſt occaſion for them? Her flouriſhing ſtate was to ariſe from commerce; for this the wonderful invention of the compaſs made way, by which thoſe amazing diſcoveries of new worlds on the globe were made. By commerce riches, and by riches luxury muſt neceſſarily be introduced, againſt which no ſtate was ever able to ſtand; and ſhe, from the nature of her conſtitution, was leſs able than any. When it is conſidered, that, previous to the great opening of commerce, a ſyſtem of laws was provided for her and promulgated over the whole nation, which alone was able to prevent the deſtruction attendant on luxury; that this ſyſtem was not framed by any legiſlator of her own country, (as in all other caſes) not cultivated and eſtabliſhed by the wiſdom or deſign of man, in times of knowlege, but in the days of ignorance, when our forefathers knew not it's particular uſe and fitneſs to their country; that it was not brought in by the hand of power, and ſupported

by authority, but made it's way againſt the paſſions, prejudices, intereſts, and violence of mankind; that a reformation was begun of the abuſes which had crept into this ſyſtem, at a moſt critical time, and that not from any views to publick utility, but from agents who were doing good in the dark; when it is conſidered, that Great Britain by theſe means, in her very infancy, and juſt emerging out of darkneſs, found herſelf in poſſeſſion of a wiſer and better ſyſtem of moral laws, than the labour of centuries in the moſt poliſhed and intelligent nations ever produced; that this ſyſtem was not only calculated in the moſt exact manner for all the purpoſes of ſociety in general, but peculiarly adapted to the particular circumſtances of this country above all others; when all theſe things are conſidered, ſure there is not one of the leaſt reflection who muſt not neceſſarily ſee the hand of God throughout.

That the goſpel ſyſtem is the beſt calculated for the univerſal good of mankind, and all the uſes of ſociety, is a confeſſion extorted even from the mouths of it's greateſt enemies and oppoſers. That it is peculiarly adapted to our country and conſtitution, may at once be ſeen by any one who will take a view of both. That one principle chiefly inculcated by it was abſolutely neceſſary to a people, whoſe flouriſhing ſtate muſt be owing to commerce, I mean that enlarged principle of univerſal benevolence, which extending the narrow bounds of our affections beyond the little ſpot

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in which we caſually firſt drew air, teaches us to look on the whole world as our country, and to love all mankind as our brethren; that ſuch a principle, I ſay, muſt be of the utmoſt uſe and benefit to a commercial people, can not be denied. If all this be ſo, if not only the well-being, but the very being of our ſtate depends upon the belief of it's divine inſtitution, is it our buſineſs to be too curiouſly inquiſitive into it's original? Shall we not embrace the bleſſings which it brings, becauſe we can not be certain of the hand from which they come? Would not a man be reckoned an ideot who acted ſo in the common affairs of life? It is ſo much, ſo abſolutely our intereſt to believe it, that far from requiring demonſtration to ſupport it, nothing but the moſt abſolute demonſtration of the contrary ought to have the leaſt weight with us. Did it contain any thing indeed prejudicial to the intereſts of ſociety in general, or the welfare of it's members in particular, it would then be the buſineſs of all men to examine narrowly into it's foundation, and it would be their duty to refuſe obedience to it, unleſs it were unqueſtionably proved to come from God himſelf. But if it be allowed to be perfectly calculated for the good of the whole, as well as of every individual, as it would be the higheſt abſurdity in us to refuſe obedience to it without ſuch proof, ſo it would be inconſiſtent with the wiſdom of that divine nature, which does nothing in vain, to furniſh us with ſuch proof as we ſhould unreaſonably

ſonably require. Demonſtration is ſuperfluous, where probability is ſufficient. What ſhall we ſay then to a ſet of men who allow the utility of the ſyſtem, and yet do their utmoſt to deſtroy it's effect? Are they not enemies to ſociety, do they not declare themſelves ſuch in the very act, who attempt to deſtroy the force of any principle apparently for the good of ſociety? Are they not enemies to their country who would endeavour to looſen and ſhake the baſis of it's conſtitution? Suppoſe it were in their power to give abſolute demonſtration (impoſſible indeed) that this religion came not from God, and by that means they ſhould deſtroy the effect of the only principle by which the nobleſt conſtitution upon earth could be ſupported, what reward ſhould theſe men expect? Should it not be oppoſite to what the preſervers of their country have met with? Should not a pillar of infamy be erected to their memories? It might be doubted whether there could be any ſuch men upon earth, were there not too many glaring proofs of it. The tranſcendent excellence of our holy religion hath neceſſarily raiſed enemies to it. For as this noble ſyſtem is admirably framed for the public benefit, as well as the real good of every member, ſo is it directly oppoſite to the ſenſual gratifications and ſelfiſh views of individuals. Whilſt therefore there are ſenſualiſts or weak ſelfiſh men, who miſtake their true intereſt in the world, they will neceſſarily be it's oppoſers and enemies. Whatever

ever ſpecious pretext of liberty or virtue they may ſhew forth, ſelfiſhneſs is at the bottom. Watch their actions, and you will find them ſelfiſh. Whoever endeavours to looſen or break the bonds of ſociety, in that inſtance ſhews that he prefers his individual ſelf to the whole. Whoever contends for a liberty to act againſt the good of ſociety, wants to put it in practice. Whoever complains of reſtraints upon natural appetites, wants to gratify thoſe appetites. Pity it is that ſuch men were not baniſhed together to ſome deſolate iſland, where they would ſoon be convinced by experience of the neceſſity of having recourſe to thoſe very principles from the motive of ſelf-preſervation, which in a ſocial ſtate, from a motive of ſelf-gratification, they would have deſtroyed.

CHAP. XV.

Of the means by which the principle of religion may be ſupported, and the chief cauſe of it's decay ſhewn to ariſe from a material defect in education.

HAving ſhewn the neceſſity of the principle, it will be now proper to conſider the means by which it may be ſupported in it's due vigour. If it be ſaid that this coming from God muſt of neceſſity make it's way in ſpite of all oppoſition on the part of man, and fulfil the ends of it's inſtitution,

tion, the argument is fallacious, * 'We are not 'to think, it is the work of God, and therefore 'not to be ſeconded by human care. Far other-'wiſe; for that very reaſon it claims our utmoſt 'care and diligence, it being the indiſpenſible 'duty of all good men, throughout the whole 'courſe of their lives, to co-operate with the de-'ſigns of providence. In religion, as in nature, 'God doth ſomewhat, and ſomewhat is to be 'done on the part of man. He cauſes the earth 'to bring forth materials for food and raiment, 'but human induſtry muſt improve, prepare, and 'properly apply both the one and the other, or 'mankind may periſh with cold and hunger. 'And, according to this ſame analogy, the prin-'ciples of piety and religion, the things that be-'long to our ſalvation, altho' originally and pri-'marily the work of God, yet require the pro-'tection of human government, as well as the 'furtherance and aid of all wiſe and good men.'

God has revealed his will, and ſupplied the means to put it in execution; this is all that is to be hoped for on his part, to make a proper uſe of thoſe means is the buſineſs of man. The moral precepts of chriſtianity are ſo clear, that to be aſſented to they need only be known. But knowlege without practice is uſeleſs. To perſuade men to practiſe them, it is neceſſary that they ſhould be forcibly inculcated, and frequent impreſſions made, till practice ripens into habit. Even then

* Biſhop of Cloyne.

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thoſe impreſſions can not be too often repeated, conſidering the frailty of human nature, for fear of a relapſe. How admirably has our conſtitution taken care of this, in eſtabliſhing an order of men ſupported by the public, whoſe whole buſineſs it is weekly and daily to attend to this point. But the end of their inſtitution can never be anſwered without power of ſpeaking, and ſkill in oratory. Deprived of theſe the pulpit is at beſt uſeleſs, and the preacher a cypher. We might as reaſonably expect that red coats, and muſkets, without ammunition, or military diſcipline in ſoldiers, ſhould preſerve our country againſt the invaſion of an enemy, as that black gowns, and bands, and empty forms, or the

'Shooting calm words folded up in ſmoke'*

ſhould be ſufficient weapons in the hands of the clergy to ſupport the church againſt the attacks of vice and infidelity.

There are two ways by which the purity of religion, and it's precepts, may be defended; by ſpeaking, and by writing. The firſt is the immediate gift of God, who has annexed to it (when cultivated by man) powers almoſt miraculous, and an energy nearly divine. He has given to it tones to charm the ear and penetrate the heart; he has joined to it action, and looks, to move the inmoſt ſoul. By that attention is kept up without pain, and conviction carried to the mind with delight.

* Shakeſpear's king John.

Perſuaſion

Perſuaſion is ever it's attendant, and the paſſions own it for a maſter. Great as is the force of it's powers, ſo unbounded is their extent. All mankind are capable of it's impreſſions, the ignorant as well as the wiſe, the illiterate as well as the learned.

The ſecond is the invention of man, a mere work of art, and therefore can contain no natural power. It's uſe is to give ſtability to ſound, and permanence to thought: to preſerve words that otherwiſe might periſh as they are ſpoke, and to arreſt ideas that might vaniſh as they riſe in the mind: to aſſiſt the memory in treaſuring theſe up, and to convey knowlege at diſtance thro' the eye, where it could find no entrance by the ear.

The vaſt ſuperiority of the former over the latter is obvious enough from this view. There is not one power belonging to the latter, which the former, whereever it's influence can be exerted, does not poſſeſs in a more eminent degree. Whereas there are many powers belonging to the former, in which the latter has no ſhare. That works by the whole force of artificial as well as natural means; This by artificial means only. None but the learned can receive benefit from the one, all mankind from the other. As the bulk of the people are illiterate, it's public utility therefore muſt be much greater. The one ſhould be conſidered as an handmaid to the other, and employed chiefly

ly in ſuch offices as ſhe can not do in her own perſon.

Should therefore our clergy deſert the ſtrong natural means given by God himſelf to ſupport religion and morality; means, the abſolute neceſſity of which is daily pointed out to them in every act of office; ſhould they have recourſe to the weak, the artificial, the mere inventions of man, is it ſtrange that their holy cauſe ſhould ſuffer? In attempting to ſupport it only by polemical writings, have they not quitted their proper arms and faſtneſſes, to engage the enemy at their own weapons, and upon their own ground? By the one, they might command the paſſions of mankind, and gain them intirely to their ſide. In the other, the paſſions, prejudices, and temporal intereſts of men, were too much againſt them, to expect that they ſhould be impartial judges of what was coolly offered to their underſtanding. It is no eaſy matter to perſuade men to employ much labour and pains to come at the truth of a thing, which they wiſh to be falſe; and a right concluſion from long deductions of reaſoning is difficult to be made even by unbiaſſed minds, but is hardly ever to be expected from ſuch as are prejudiced, unleſs conviction like light be forced upon them. In the former, the clergy had the field intirely to themſelves, no antagoniſt could riſe up after them to eraſe whatever impreſſions their oratory had made. In the latter, they had as many adverſaries as pleaſed to take the field, ſkilled

ſkilled in all the weapons of logic, and armed with the full force of ridicule; which was but too likely to make ſtrong impreſſions upon minds that were before prepoſſeſſed againſt them and their doctrines. How was it poſſible therefore, that they ſhould not loſe their cauſe, when brought before prejudiced judges? Or how could they expect that truth ſhould prevail, when ridicule, not reaſon, was ſet up to be it's teſt?

By this method, our divines have not only changed their celeſtial armour made by God himſelf, of proof againſt all human force, for ſuch as was made by the weak hands of imperfect man; their weapons tempered in pure ætherial fire, for thoſe of brittle ſteel; they have alſo ſwerved from the example, and deſerted the method pointed out by their great founder. It was by preaching, not writing, that our bleſſed Saviour propagated his doctrines. His example was followed by the apoſtles, who committed nothing to writing but plain matters of fact, and unadorned precepts. It was the gift of the tongues, not the pen, which was miraculouſly beſtowed on the apoſtles; and it is to be ſuppoſed when they addreſſed the different nations in their different languages, that they did it with force and energy. The mere utterance of the ſounds, out of which their language was compoſed, could have but little effect, except the wonder it might occaſion, how illiterate men ſhould be able to acquire that art; but when each found himſelf addreſſed to not only in words, but in

in the ſpirit of their ſeveral languages; their expreſſions enforced by proper tones and cadence; and the whole delivered with ſuch energy as could alone penetrate the heart, they at once ſaw and felt, that this could be only the work of God; nor could ſuch multitudes of converts have been made in one day by any other means. In what ſort of ſounds, with what kind of geſture, muſt St. Paul have ſpoke, when Felix trembled? With what power and oratory muſt he have addreſſed the Athenians, when that poliſhed people looked upon him with ſuch admiration? And what muſt have been the force of his eloquence, when the men of Lyſtra called him Mercury, and would have paid him divine honours?

And indeed when the amazing ſtrength, and almoſt boundleſs power of oratory is conſidered, no other inſtrument could be found of ſufficient force, and ſuitable dignity, to ſupport the important and glorious cauſe of religion. If the eloquence of the antients was irreſiſtible upon common topics, where only the temporal intereſts of men were concerned, how much more extenſive muſt it's power be, where the eternal welfare is it's ſubject? If the mere charms of oratory alone, independent of the ſubject, could have ſuch effects; if the attention of all Greece was taken up by a diſpute between two orators, about a trifling reward, an honorary crown, how much more intereſted muſt each hearer be in a cauſe, whoſe ſubject is the higheſt reward to himſelf, that can

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be conceived by man, and a never-fading crown of glory, of which he can not be deprived? If Cicero, in pleading the cauſe of a criminal, could make the blood forſake the cheeks of a Cæſar, and unnerve his arm, why might not the greateſt and mightieſt amongſt us be made to tremble like Felix, could our preachers, like St. Paul, reaſon with force and energy upon righteouſneſs and judgement to come? There can be no doubt, but that an equal degree of ſkill in that art would have much nobler effects amongſt us, and be poſſeſſed of a much more extenſive power, than amongſt the antients, as its ſubject would be ſo much more important, and the field in which it ſhould diſplay itſelf ſo much enlarged. It muſt alſo have a greater command over the paſſions, as the object of our hopes and fears is increaſed. Whoever doubts of the truth of this, may ſoon be convinced by examining into the wonderful effects which have been produced by the wild uncultivated oratory of our methodiſt preachers.

The ſtudy, or neglect of this art, can not poſſibly be a matter of indifference to us. It muſt be productive of the beſt, or attended with the worſt conſequences. It muſt either effectually ſupport religion againſt all oppoſition, or be the principal means of its deſtruction. The church ſervice, according as it is either well or ill adminiſtered, muſt excite great emotions, or ſet people to ſleep; it muſt give delight, or occaſion diſguſt; it muſt carry conviction of truth with it, or

appear

appear fictitious. And indeed nothing can contribute more ſtrongly to make the latter opinion prevail, than hearing its doctrines delivered in tones and accents quite foreign from nature and truth. In this, as in life, the general maxim will hold good, that before you can perſuade a man into any opinion he muſt firſt be convinced that you believe it yourſelf *. This he can never be, unleſs the tones of voice in which you ſpeak come from the heart, accompanied by correſponding looks, and geſtures, which naturally reſult from a man who ſpeaks in earneſt †. And this is one of the beſt lights with which nature has furniſhed us to prevent our being impoſed upon in our converſe with each other; and indeed, without ſome ſuch plain characteriſtical marks, truth could not long exiſt upon earth; nor could there be any mutual confidence amongſt men. For, conſidered only as artificial ſounds, the words of falſhood are as eaſily ſpoke as thoſe of truth; the lips and tongue diſcharge their office equally well in the one and the other. But the tones that are declarative of truth muſt come from the heart, which at the ſame time ſtrikes other chords; the

* Caput enim eſſe arbitrabatur oratoris, ut & ipſis, apud quos ageret, talis, qualem ſe ipſe optaret, videretur. Cic. de orat. lib. 1.

† Omnis enim motus animi ſuum quendam a natura habet vultum, & ſonum, & geſtum; totumque corpus hominis, & ejus omnis vultus, omneſque voces, ut nervi in fidibus, ita ſonant, ut a motu animi quoque ſunt pulſæ. Idem, lib. 3.

face,

face and limbs act as uniſons, and bear teſtimony to the truth ſo declared. And tho' this power may be uſurped, and practiſed by art, ſo as to impoſe upon many, yet, as it requires great pain and ſkill, the examples of thoſe who ſucceed in the attempt, are not many. And as art, tho' it may imitate, can never come up to nature; tho' it may put on her reſemblance, can never be poſſeſſed of her energy; it can hardly ever impoſe on the judicious and the obſerving. On this account, whenever we ſee thoſe ſtrong ſtamps of truth made in nature's mint, the coin paſſes current, and the words are taken for ſterling. Where they are not very obvious, we ſuſpect counterfeits; and where they are abſent, we ſuppoſe the metal is baſe.

If this be ſo, what muſt neceſſarily be the conſequence of the manner in which our church ſervice is generally performed? Muſt not truth itſelf paſs for falſhood, when covered over with her vail? If none of the natural criterions by which ſhe is diſtinguiſhed appear, muſt not all paſs for fictitious? How can a clergyman hope to gain belief to what he utters, when he utters it not in ſuch a manner as if he believed it himſelf? This therefore may be eaſily conſidered as the great ſource of irreligion; nor would it be a very confident aſſertion to ſay, that this defect in the miniſtry has made more infidels than all the arts and ſubtleties of the enemies to religion. For as it muſt be allowed that the divine ſervice is generally performed in a ſlovenly and diſagreeable,

or

or elſe in a cold and unaffecting manner, it follows, that many of a nicer taſte are kept away thro' diſguſt from places of religious worſhip, and they who continue to frequent them may eaſily be made the worſe by it, but can hardly receive any benefit. Their devotion can not be raiſed, however it may flag, by hearing prayers ill read; nor will the doctrines from the pulpit acquire new force or credit, by being delivered in a lifeleſs manner, and in unnatural tones. On the contrary, being accuſtomed to ſee nothing in the mode but what is fictitious, men will habitually come to think the thing itſelf ſo, and muſt be inſenſibly led to conſider the whole as a matter of form, a mere human inſtitution to anſwer the purpoſes of government. The experience of mankind may be appealed to upon this occaſion, whether it is not generally confeſſed in words, as well as ſhewn in practice, by thoſe who viſit the churches every Sunday, that they perform this ceremony more out of decency and example, than from any aſſiſtance they find there to devotion, or any inſtruction from the ſermon. And indeed, were they not to confeſs it, the general coldneſs and inattention, the levity in the behaviour of ſome, and drowſineſs even to profound ſleep in others, neceſſarily infuſed by the opiate of a dull motonony, would too plainly evince the truth of the obſervation. *

That

* In this caſe, what was before obſerved of the laws may be applied to religion. 'There are two ſorts of 'corruption

That contrary effects would follow from a contrary method, muſt be ſenſibly felt by all who have occaſionally heard the ſervice well performed, or a diſcourſe well delivered. The different impreſſions which they then made upon them muſt convince them of this truth. And indeed it is ſufficiently demonſtrated by the crowds which flock to hear a preacher, whoſe natural talents for elocution have ſet him above the common run.

The ingenious author of the Spectator has wrote a paper on the reading of the liturgy, in ſo clear and forcible a manner, and it is ſo appoſite to the caſe in point, that I am tempted to preſent part of it immediately to the eyes of my reader inſtead of referring him to the book.

† 'The well reading of the common prayer 'is of ſo great importance, and ſo much neglect-'ed, that I take the liberty to offer to your con-'ſideration ſome particulars on that ſubject: and 'what more worthy your obſervation than this? 'A thing ſo public, and of ſo high conſequence. 'It is indeed wonderful, that the frequent exer-'ciſe of it ſhould not make the performers of that 'duty more expert in it. This inability, as I 'conceive, proceeds from the little care that is 'taken of their reading while boys at ſchool;

'corruption, one when men do not obſerve religion, 'the other when they are corrupted by religion; an 'incurable evil, becauſe it is in the very remedy it-'ſelf."

† Spect, vol. ii. No. 147.

'where

'where, when they are got into Latin, they are 'looked upon as above Engliſh, the reading of 'which is wholly neglected, or at leaſt read to 'very little purpoſe, without any due obſerva- 'tions made to them of the proper accent, and 'manner of reading. By this means they have 'acquired ſuch ill habits as will not eaſily be re- 'moved. The only way that I know of to re- 'medy this is, to propoſe ſome perſon of great 'ability that way, as a pattern for them; exam- 'ple being moſt effectual to convince the learned, 'as well as to inſtruct the ignorant.

'You muſt know, ſir, I have been a conſtant 'frequenter of the ſervice of the church of En- 'gland for above theſe four years laſt paſt, and 'till Sunday was ſevennight never diſcovered to 'ſo great a degree the excellency of the com- 'mon prayer. When, being at St. James's Gar- 'lick-hill church, I heard the ſervice read ſo diſ- 'tinctly, ſo emphatically, and ſo fervently, that 'it was next to an impoſſibility to be unattentive. 'My eyes and my thoughts could not wander as 'uſual, but were confined to my prayers; I then 'conſidered I addreſſed myſelf to the Almighty, 'and not to a beautiful face. And when I re- 'flected on my former performances of that du- 'ty, I found I had run it over as a matter of form, 'in compariſon to the manner in which I then 'diſcharged it. My mind was really affected, 'and fervent wiſhes accompanied my words. 'The confeſſion was read with ſuch a reſigned 'humility, the abſolution with ſuch a comfortable

'authority, the thankſgiving with ſuch a religious
'joy, as made me feel thoſe affections of the
'mind in a manner I never did before. To re-
'medy therefore the grievance above complained
'of, I humbly propoſe, that this excellent read-
'er, upon the next, and every annual aſſembly
'of the clergy of Sion College, and all other
'conventions, ſhould read prayers before them.
'For then thoſe that are afraid of ſtretching
'their mouths, and ſpoiling their ſoft voices, will
'learn to read with clearneſs, loudneſs, and
'ſtrength. Others that affect a rakiſh negligent
'air, by folding their arms, and lolling on their
'book, will be taught a decent behaviour, and
'comely erection of body. Thoſe that read ſo
'faſt as if impatient of their work may learn to
'ſpeak deliberately. There is another ſort of
'perſons, whom I call Pindaric readers, as be-
'ing confined to no ſet meaſure; theſe pronounce
'five or ſix words with great deliberation, and
'the five or ſix ſubſequent ones with as great ce-
'lerity: the firſt part of a ſentence with a very
'exalted voice, and the latter part with a ſub-
'miſſive one: ſome time again with one ſort of
'tone, and immediately after with a very differ-
'rent one. Theſe gentlemen will learn of my
'admired reader an evenneſs of voice and deli-
'very. And all who are innocent of theſe affecta-
'tions, but read with ſuch an indifference as if
'they did not underſtand the language, may then
'be informed of the art of reading movingly, and
'fervently; how to place the emphaſis, and give

'the

'the proper accent to each word, and how to vary 'the voice according to the nature of the ſen- 'tence.'

There can be no doubt that if prayers always were read in the moving and fervent manner above deſcribed, that there would be much ſtronger inducements to go to church, and devotion would be much promoted by it. But it is in his other office of preaching that the clergyman will find the greateſt occaſion for ſkill in oratory. Here the whole field of morality, as well as religion, is opened to him to diſplay his talents. The important truths of both are to be made plain by him, and enforced. In this point of view, were he equal to the taſk, he muſt be conſidered as a member of the moſt uſeful and moſt honourable order that ever exiſted upon earth. What advantage, were he but equal in accompliſhments, would he have over the orators of old (who were always conſidered as of the firſt rank in the ſtate) in point of dignity of ſubject, power of moving the paſſions, and general utility. If the art of perſuaſion be allowed to be of more force than either wit or knowlege to acquire a ſuperiority over others, and at the ſame time to conciliate their eſteem and love, in what a rank of pre-eminence might not this body of men have ſtood over all other profeſſions, had they only applied themſelves to the ſtudy of that art. Whilſt the neglect of it has probably been one of the main cauſes of the contempt into which the order is fallen. Nor is this hard to be accounted for; for

what can be a greater ſubject of ridicule than to ſee people daily attempting what they are not able to execute? Or what can poſſeſs one more ſtrongly that an art (however entitled) is merely mechanical, than when it is every day ſeen performed in a mechanical manner: and it is obvious enough that if the profeſſion of holy orders comes once to be conſidered as a mechanical art, it will of courſe be conſidered as below all others.

How far the extraordinary abilities, and perfection of ſkill in the artiſts may raiſe even the meaner arts in the eſtimation of the world, and how much a deficiency of talents, and imperfection in the profeſſors, may degrade the nobleſt, is a point too obvious to be enlarged upon. The common ſenſe of mankind confers rank and dignity on the ſeveral arts, and profeſſions, according as they contribute to the body, ſuch as promote the advantage of the former are to be preferred to ſuch as have only the latter for their object; ſuch as require intellectual powers, to ſuch as ſtand in need only of the mechanical; and thoſe profeſſions which contribute to the uſe and profit of mankind ſtand before ſuch as only promote their pleaſure. But thoſe in which both are united are clearly pre-eminent over the reſt, and naturally acquire a ſuperiority over each other according to the ſeveral degrees of that union. This rule is as invariable as that of common ſenſe, nor can any of theſe arts and profeſſions loſe their natural rank, but

but in proportion as they fail in anſwering their end; which can only happen from the inſufficiency of the artiſts and profeſſors. If we try the profeſſion of holy orders by this rule, we ſhall find that it is evidently ſuperior to all others. It muſt be allowed that the bulk of mankind have not leiſure to be philoſophers, or to ſee things in their cauſes. And yet the well-being of the ſtate depends upon their actions being regulated by the rules of improved reaſon. They muſt therefore imbibe all their principles of knowlege, as well as conduct in life, from thoſe who have opportunity and abilities to enquire into the ſources of the moral duties, and the natural relations of things. * 'But if to inform the underſtanding, and regulate the will, is the moſt laſting and diffuſive benefit, there will not be found ſo uſeful and excellent an inſtitution as that of the chriſtian prieſthood, which is now become the ſcorn of fools. That a numerous order of men ſhould be conſecrated to the ſtudy of the moſt ſublime and beneficial truths, with a deſign to propagate them by their diſcourſes and writings, to inform their fellow creatures of the being and attributes of the deity, to poſſeſs their minds with the ſenſe of a future ſtate, and not only to explain the nature of every virtue and moral duty, but likewiſe to perſuade mankind to the practice of them by the moſt powerful and engaging

* Guard. N° 130.

'motives, is a thing ſo excellent and neceſſary to 'the well-being of the world, that no body but 'a modern free-thinker could have the forehead, 'or folly, to turn it into ridicule.

But neither the ſcorn of fools, nor the ridicule of free-thinkers, could in the leaſt affect, or depreciate an inſtitution ſo excellent in it's nature, ſo abſolutely neceſſary to the welfare of mankind, if the miniſtry were really equal to the diſcharge of their office. Their chief end is to inform the underſtanding, and regulate the will of others. The firſt can not be done, unleſs their own ideas are conveyed into the minds of others with perſpicuity and force; nor the laſt, unleſs the paſſions of men are wrought upon to excite them to good works, and deter them from ſuch as are evil; in as much as the paſſions are known to be the great movers to, or reſtrainers from action. Neither of which, can be done without ſkill in oratory. All other requiſites to the prieſthood without that, tho' poſſeſſed in the moſt eminent degree, are uſeleſs to it's end. This is the preacher's inſtrument with which he is to work, and without this his knowlege and piety are of as little uſe to the world, as the ſkill of a painter would be without pencil or colours, or that of a muſician without the power of conveying ſounds. Poſſeſſed of this, no artiſt whatever is ſo equal to the completion of his deſigns; for tho' the difficulty of arriving at the end, be equal to it's utility, and grandeur, and conſequently beyond that of all others; yet the means are proportioned, and adequate to the

mighty

mighty work. For who upon earth is equal in faculty and powers to the man, in whom are united the true philoſopher, the chriſtian hero, and the potent orator? Or how can ſuch precepts fail of having their deſired effect, which are founded on reaſon, ſupported by revelation, confirmed by the living example of the preacher, and impreſſed on the yielding mind by the irreſiſtible charms of eloquence? An union ſo powerful, that what Agamemnon ſaid in regard to the wiſe Neſtor of the deſtruction of Troy may with much more truth and propriety be applied in this caſe, that were there but nine ſuch men at the head of the church, the bulwarks of vice would ſoon be deſtroyed, and the whole ſtate of corruption periſh.

Mr. Addiſon in ſpeaking upon this ſubject, has the following paſſage. * 'The light in which 'theſe points ſhould be expoſed to the view of one 'who is prejudiced againſt the names, religion, 'church, prieſt, and the like, is, to conſider the 'clergy as ſo many philoſophers, the churches as 'ſchools, and their ſermons as lectures, for the 'information and improvement of the audience. 'How would the heart of Socrates or Tully 'have rejoiced, had they lived in a nation, where 'the law had made proviſion for philoſophers, to 'read lectures of morality and theology every 'ſeventh day, in ſeveral thouſands of ſchools 'erected at the public charge throughout the

* Guard. Numb. 130.

'country; at which lectures all ranks and sexes, 'without distinction, were obliged to be present, 'for their general improvement? And what 'wicked wretches would they think those men, 'who should endeavour to defeat the purpose of 'so divine an institution?'

With all due deference to the judgment of so great a man, I think he has here mistaken the point, and what he has advanced would have had much more force had he substituted the word orators, in the room of philosophers; and this would probably have been the case, could his assertion have been warranted by practice. By orators, I mean such as they were of old, when none were thought worthy of that title but those who were at the same time philosophers *. For it can hardly be expected that philosophy alone could do more with us, than it did with the antients. That it should be more powerful when set to work by mercenary views, than when actuated by the nobler principle of fame. Or to consider it in regard to the times when it became mercenary amongst them, that it's professors should be more excellent with us, where their stipends are fixed, and settled without any reference to their abilities, than with them, where their whole income and emoluments

* Fueruntque hæc ut Cicero apertissime colligit, quem admodum juncta naturâ, sic officio quoque copulata: ut iidem sapientes atque eloquentes haberentur. Quinctil. lib. 1.

depended

depended upon their ſkill in the art which they profeſſed.

The ſeparation of philoſophy from oratory was the main cauſe that both were in a ſhort time deſtroyed. The union of the ſoul and body are not more neceſſary for any uſeful purpoſe in life, than the union of oratory and philoſophy for their mutual welfare. Whilſt the philoſophers were buſy in ſearching after the knowlege of things, they did not conſider what an intimate connection there was between ideas and words; without a right uſe of which they could neither make any ſure progreſs themſelves in ſcience, nor at all communicate their thoughts to others. Accordingly we find that after the ſeparation an infinite variety of ſects aroſe, each of which vain-gloriouſly boaſted that they were poſſeſſed of the only true philoſophy; whilſt in fact almoſt all their diſputes were merely about words *; nor was the confuſion at Babel greater, occaſioned by the variety of tongues, than was the confuſion of knowlege amongſt theſe different ſects, thro' their want of preciſion in language. Oratory and philoſophy when united, like bullion ſtamped in the mint, occaſioned a briſk and free circulation thro' the whole commonwealth of ſcience; when ſeparated, they were to be conſidered as coin hoarded by miſers, or melted down into pieces of ornamental

* Verbi enim controverſia jam diu torquet Græculos, homines contentionis cupidiores quam veritatis.
Cic. de orat. l. 1.

plate. However rich private perſons might think themſelves in compariſon of others, yet, whilſt the ſtate was poor, there could be but little ſecurity for the preſervation of the wealth, amaſſed by individuals, as the members muſt neceſſarily be involved in the deſtruction of the whole.

This ſeparation was no leſs hurtful to the ſtate itſelf, than to knowlege. The natural conſequence of it was, that their wiſe men were no longer orators, their orators were no longer wiſe. When men of the greateſt abilities and integrity, who were the beſt qualified to ſupport and invigorate the ſtate, retired from public buſineſs, and paſſed their lives in the ſhades of privacy and contemplation, their place was of courſe ſupplied by thoſe of meaner talents and worſe diſpoſitions. As theſe had not virtue for their end, there was no occaſion for wiſdom as the means. Their ends being altogether ſelfiſh, cunning and the art of humouring and flattering the capricious multitude were the ſureſt means to attain them. Thus corruption and folly eaſily carried all before them, when wiſdom and virtue had quitted the field. The ſoul of oratory was fled, and only the uſeleſs corpſe remained, preſerved and embalmed like the Egyptian mummies, by the care of rhetoricians. Nor could philoſophy long ſurvive it; for how could ſhe hope to keep her ground, when ſhe had parted with her arms of defence, and pulled down her own encloſures. Whilſt ſhe was united with eloquence, a ſenſe of ſhame kept out all pretenders, and none but ſuch as ſpoke with ſkill, with accu-

racy,

racy, clearneſs, and elegance, could be heard without marks of ſcorn and contempt, upon any of the topics of philoſophy. But when philoſophy grew ambitious, when ſhe claimed an independent throne, and diſdained all alliance with oratory, ſhe indeed greatly increaſed the number of her ſubjects, but they were ſuch as were far from adding to her power. When eloquence was deſpiſed, all men were at liberty to ſpeak their thoughts publickly in their own manner *; this opened the mouths of multitudes of fools, who all thought they had an equal right, as rational beings, to harangue upon the ſubjects of right reaſon and true philoſophy. Nor could their pretenſions to theſe be eaſily ſet aſide, when the bulk of mankind were to be their judges, equally ignorant with themſelves, and equally intereſted with the claim. Beſides, their pretenſions to philoſophy could only be determined in this caſe by the intellectual faculty, which is far from being predominant in the multitude; whereas the ſenſes bore the greateſt ſway in judging about eloquence, and conſequently all mankind were capable of pronouncing with tolerable exactneſs about the merit of it's profeſſors †. Whilſt therefore phi-

* Nunc autem quæ velut propria philoſophiæ aſſeruntur paſſim tractamus omnes. Quis enim non de juſto, æquo, ac bono modo non & vir peſſimus loquitur? Quis non etiam ruſticorum aliqua de cauſis naturalibus quærit? Quinct.

† Nunquam de bono oratore, aut non bono, doctis hominibus cum populo diſſentio fuit. Cic. in Brut. n. 185.

loſophy was guarded (if I may be allowed the expreſſion) by the prieſthood of oratory, the profane and the vulgar were kept out of her ſanctuary. Her doctrines were explained only by ſuch as had ſtudied and underſtood them; knowlege in thoſe being as neceſſary to the orator as ſkill in ſpeaking; for the latter would be vain and uſeleſs without the former †. She was therefore always ſhewn in her true light, and all appeared regular and beautiful. But when this order was aboliſhed, all men laid claim to the diſcharge of the ſacred office; the ignorant and vain, the loud and the pretending, were the foremoſt in aſſuming the title. Her fences were deſtroyed by the multitude of pretenders, and her holy ground trampled by unhallowed feet. Her mazes and labyrinths were broken down by ſuch as had not the clue to guide them thro' the regular confuſion, and in a ſhort time all was reduced to anarchy and chaos. Her doctrines, formerly ſo clear and beautiful when ſhewn by wiſdom in the light of truth, were now darkened by ignorance and diſtorted by falſhood. The words of knowlege were contaminated by the mouths of fools, and the precepts of virtue

† Etenim ex rerum cognitione efflorescat & redundet oportet oratio; quæ niſi ſubeſt res ab oratore percepta, cognita, inanem quandam habet elocutionem, & pene puerilem. Dicendi enim virtus, niſi ei qui dicit ea de quibus dicit percepta ſint, extare non poteſt.

Hæc autem oratio, ſi res non ſubeſt ab oratore percepta & cognita, aut nulla ſit neceſſe eſt, aut omnium irriſione ludatur. Cic. de orat. lib. 1.

corrupted

corrupted by the tongues of the vicious. Meanneſs joined with arrogance, and vanity with weakneſs in the profeſſors, ſoon brought the profeſſion itſelf into contempt. Appearance with them ſupplied the place of reality, and form of ſubſtance.

* 'For it was not by the means of virtue, or 'knowlege, that they laboured to be thought phi-'loſophers, but they made uſe of a ſolemn ſeveri-'ty of countenance, and a dreſs different from 'the reſt of the world, as coverings to the vileſt 'morals.'

It may be worth the reader's while to obſerve, how exactly this deſcription of thoſe pretended philoſophers, who brought true philoſophy into contempt, and were the means of it's deſtruction, agrees with thoſe hypocritical fanatics in the reign of Charles the firſt, who brought an odium and diſgrace on religion, and for a time deſtroyed both that and the ſtate.

If therefore oratory was ſo neceſſary to the ſupport of philoſophy, how much more muſt it be to that of religion? To enter into a minute diſquiſition of this point would take up too much time, and perhaps unneceſſarily. It will be ſufficient to conſider the nature of the ends propoſed by the two, and the neceſſity as well as proportion of the means will appear of courſe. The end

* Non enim virtute ac ſtudiis ut haberentur philoſophi, laborabant; ſed vultum, & triſtitiam, & diſſentientem a cæteris habitum, peſſimis moribus prætendebant. Quinct. lib. 1.

of

'judge ſhall catch our warmth; by no means
'can we affect him with a careleſs indifference,
'but he muſt neceſſarily ſink and be diſſolved in
'our drowſineſs. Even the actors upon the ſtage
'afford an excellent example of this, who add
'ſo much grace to the productions of our beſt
'poets, that in the hearing they give us infi-
'nitely greater pleaſure than in the reading: and
'gain our attention even to the vileſt ſcribblers: ſo
'that thoſe pieces ſhall frequently bring a crowd-
'ed audience, which are not allowed a place in a
'library. But if in caſes which we know to be
'feigned, and without foundation, elocution alone
'is of ſuch efficacy, as to excite anger, fears,
'anxiety; how greatly muſt it's power be in-
'creaſed when we believe it to be founded in
'truth? I ſhall, indeed, make no ſcruple to af-
'firm, that but a very moderate oration recom-
'mended by the powers of action will be of
'greater weight, than the beſt compoſition with-
'out it. On which account Demoſthenes being

quens in theatris. Quod ſi in rebus quas fictas eſſe ſcimus et inanes tantum pronunciatio poteſt, ut iram, lacrymas, ſollicitudinem afferat, quanto plus valeant neceſſe eſt, ubi & credimus? Equidem vel mediocrem orationem commendatam viribus actionis affirmaverim plus habituram eſſe momenti, quam optimam eadem illa deſtitutam. Siquidem & Demoſthenes, quid eſſet in toto dicendi opere primum interrogatus, pronunciationi palmam dedit, eidemque ſecundum, ac tertium locum, donec ab eo quæri deſinerent: ut eam videri poſſet non præcipuam, ſed ſolam judicaſſe.

'aſked,

'aſked, what in the whole field of oratory de-
'ſerved the firſt place, gave it to * elocution; as
'alſo the ſecond, and the third, till the enquiry
'ceaſed. By which he gave us to underſtand,
'that he judged this not to be the principal, but
'the only requiſite.'

If the appearance of being firmly perſuaded themſelves of the truth of the opinions which they endeavoured to propagate was thought ſo neceſſary to the heathen, how much more muſt it be to the chriſtian philoſophers, when the leaſt ſuſpicion induced of the truth of their doctrines muſt not only deſtroy their force, but produce effects directly oppoſite to their intent. The antients were ſo convinced of this that they preſerved the appearance of truth, when the reality was gone, and the form remained long after the ſubſtance had periſhed. What ſhall we ſay then to our modern ſects, who, far from attempting to keep up this neceſſary ſemblance, are contented to deliver the ſublimeſt truths in a fictitious manner? Or ſhall we wonder when we conſider, that it is by appearance that the judgments of the world are moſt influenced, that the ſhew and ſemblance of truth ſhould in one caſe make proſelytes to falſehood, and in the other, that the ſhew and

* The meaning of this word is thus defined by Cicero. Pronunciatio eſt vocis, & vultus, & geſtus moderatio cum venuſtate. That is, Elocution is the graceful managment of the voice, countenance, and geſture.

ſemblance

ſemblance of fiction ſhould make apoſtates from truth?

If the powers of eloquence and action were ſo abſolutely neceſſary to the heathen orator to accompliſh his point in civil matters, it would be only a waſte of time, and a fruitleſs repetition, to prove how much more neceſſary it is to a chriſtian orator, to bring about the great ends of religion. What Cicero ſays of the requiſites to the diſcharge of that office is exactly deſcriptive of the function of a clergyman. * 'To inſtruct is his duty, to 'delight gives him honour, and to move the paſ-'ſions is neceſſary.' And his ſhort definition of the beſt and worſt orator will ſhew us to which claſs ours are to be referred. † 'He is the beſt 'orator, who by the powers of elocution both in-'ſtructs, and delights, and moves his auditory. 'From whence it is plain, that he who is moſt 'unlike the beſt is the worſt.'

But however near by nature the alliance between oratory and philoſophy might be, yet it depended intirely upon man to fix, or deſtroy their union. As the maintaining ſuch an union required great pains, labour, and attention, and as there was no particular profeſſion of men to whom it was abſolutely neceſſary, it is eaſy to ſee,

* Docere debitum eſt, delectare honorarium, permovere neceſſarium.

† Optimus eſt orator, qui dicendo animos audientium & docet, & delectat, & permovet. Ex quo perſpicuum eſt quod optimo diſſimillimum, id eſſe deterrimum.

that

that to ſeparate them was no difficult taſk. Ambition, and a ſpirit of rivalſhip, might ſoon engage the profeſſors of the two arts in diſputes about priority. The philoſopher, who enjoyed the mental powers in a more perfect degree than uſual, and who might be endowed with an uncommon depth of penetration in his purſuits after knowlege and truth, though perhaps without any of the natural requiſites to make him ſhine as an orator, would of courſe affect to deſpiſe talents which he did not poſſeſs, and depreciate an art which he looked upon as much inferior to his own, and which yet had rather a ſuperior rank in the eſtimation of the world. The example of the chief would ſoon be followed by all his diſciples. Whilſt, on the other ſide, the orator, furniſhed by the liberal hand of nature with uncommon powers of perſuaſion, and having improved theſe by the rules of his own art, would find nothing wanting to accompliſh his ends; and therefore would gladly decry the painful and laborious diſquiſitions of philoſophy *, and deſpiſe it's contemplative votaries as unfit for action, and as uſeleſs drones in ſociety. The war once declared between the chiefs, it would be too much the intereſt of the partiſans ſtill to keep it a-foot, and blow up the coals of diſcord, ever to ſuffer a reconcilement. Of this Cicero gives the following account,

* Difficultatis patrocinia præteximus ſegnitiæ. Quinct. lib. 1.

* 'The antients down to the time of Socrates 'always joined a perfect knowlege of morality, 'of all that belonged to the conduct of private 'life, as well as the management of public af- 'fairs, to skill in oratory. But at that time, the 'eloquent and the learned being divided into 'different sects by Socrates, and this distinction 'being afterwards kept up by all his disciples, 'the philosophers and orators held each other in 'mutual contempt.' And this war was ever after carried on with great obstinacy and animosity on either side, till it ended in the ruin of both parties. How unnatural and impolitic the rupture was, the event shewed. And the necessity of the union of these two arts for their common support, could not be proved more clearly than by the very manner in which the contest was managed. The orator and philosopher were mutually obliged to have recourse to each other's arms, both for defence and annoyance. It was whimsical enough to see one side using all the figures of rhetoric in order to depreciate oratory †, and the other

* Namque [ut ante dixi] veteres illi usque ad Socratem omnem omnium rerum quæ ad mores hominum, quæ ad vitam, quæ ad rempublicam pertinebant, cognitionem & scientiam cum dicendi ratione jungebant: postea dissociati [ut exposui] a Socrate disserti a doctis, & deinceps a Socraticis item omnibus, philosophi eloquentiam despexerunt, oratores sapientiam, Cic. de orat. l. 3.

† Multi erant præterea præclari in philosophia, & nobiles, a quibus omnibus una pene repelli voce oratorem.

other employing maxims taken from the deepeſt reſearches into truth to run down philoſophy. However, the pride, the paſſions, and intereſted views of the mercenary profeſſors of each art became ſo far engaged in the diſpute, that the breach was daily widened; and tho' a few were wiſe enough to keep clear of the quarrel, and borrow freely from both ſides, yet this was only uniting the two arts in their own perſons, and to ſerve their own purpoſes, but a general reunion was rendered impracticable. Nothing contributed ſo much to this, as a want of ſome profeſſion amongſt the antients, to which an union of theſe was abſolutely neceſſary. But if we look into the preſent times, we ſhall quickly ſee that the caſe is different. The profeſſion amongſt us which is foremoſt in point of rank, utility, and number, evidently requires it. It would be hard to ſay, whether philoſophy or oratory be moſt neceſſary to our prieſthood, as the one would be uſeleſs without the other. Without knowledge, eloquence would be but an empty ſound; without eloquence,

torem a gubernaculis civitatum, excludi ab omni doctrina, rerumque majorum ſcientia, ac tantum in judicia, & concionuculas, tanquam in aliquod piſtrinum, detrudi & compingi videbam. Sed ego neque illis aſſentiebar, neque harum diſputationum inventori, & principi longe omnium in dicendo graviſſimo & eloquentiſſimo, Platoni, cujus tum Athenis cum Carneade diligentius legi Gorgiam: quo in libro, hoc maxime admirabar Platonem, quod mihi in oratoribus irridendis ipſe eſſe orator ſummus videbatur. Cic. de orat. lib. 1.

knowlege

knowlege can never be ſhewn in its true light *. The long diſpute between theſe two was well determined by Cicero in the following manner. † 'When there is occaſion, (as it often happens) 'to ſpeak concerning the immortal gods, to treat 'of piety, of concord, of friendſhip; of the com-'mon rights of citizens, of men, and nations; 'of equity, temperance, magnanimity, and every 'kind of virtue: I ſuppoſe all the academies and 'ſchools of philoſophy will cry out, that all ſub-'jects of this kind are their property, and do not 'at all belong to the orator; to whom when I 'allow, that they ſhall have the liberty of ha-'ranguing in every corner, to employ their idle 'time, yet I ſhall make no ſcruple to determine, 'that it is peculiarly the orator's province, to ex-'plain theſe ſubjects with dignity, and pleaſure

* Ut enim hominis decus ingenium, ſic ingenii ipſius lumen eſt eloquentia. Cic. de orat.

† Etenim cum illi in dicendo ineiderint loci [quod perſæpe evenit] ut de diis immortalibus, de pietate, de concordia, de amicitia, de communi civium, de hominum, de gentium jure, de æquitate, de temperantia, de magnitudine animi, de omni virtutis genere ſit dicendum; clamabunt, credo, omnia gymnaſia, atque omnes philoſophorum ſcholæ, ſua hæc eſſe omnia propria; nihil omnino ad oratorem pertinere. Quibus ego, ut de his rebus omnibus in angulis, conſumendi otii cauſa, diſſerant, cum conceſſero, illud tamen oratori tribuam, & dabo, ut eadem, de quibus illi tenui quodam exſanguique ſermone diſputant, hic cum omni gravitate & jucunditate expliçet. Cic. de orat. lib. 1.

'to

'to his hearers, concerning which thoſe men 'hold formal diſputations in a lean and lifeleſs 'diſcourſe.' Can there be a more accurate deſcription of the perfect diſcharge of the function of the chriſtian prieſthood? To this order of men therefore, a re-union of theſe arts is not only neceſſary, but there are the ſtrongeſt motives to encourage the attempt. All the means requiſite to carry oratory to it's higheſt pitch are furniſhed to them in a more liberal manner than they ever were to any other profeſſion. Let us ſee what the moſt eminent writers upon the ſubject required to conſtitute their perfect orators, and we ſhall find them all included in the qualifications neceſſary to holy orders. One of the firſt requiſites laid down by Cicero is, that he ſhould be a * good man. And Quinctilian does not ſcruple to ſay, that none but a † good man can be a perfect orator. This opinion is founded in the reaſon and nature of things. For as no one can deſerve the name of an orator who does not uſe his talents in the cauſe of virtue, and as the perfection of eloquence conſiſts in ſpeaking from the

* Si intelligam poſſe ad ſummos pervenire, non ſolum hortabor ut elaboret, ſed etiam ſi vir quoque mihi bonus videbitur eſſe, obſecrabo. Cic. de orat. l. 2.

† Oratorem autem inſtituimus illum perfectum, qui eſſe niſi vir bonus non poteſt: ideoque non dicendi modo eximiam in eo facultatem, ſed omnes animi virtutes exigimus.

heart,

heart, * none but a good man can ſpeak feelingly about that which is good. In whom therefore is this qualification ſo likely to be found, as in that claſs of men, whoſe ſacred order obliges them to a greater purity of morals, and ſanctity of life, than the reſt of mankind? † The next things required are, ‡ wiſdom, and knowlege, in all affairs divine and human. To whom are theſe ſo eſſential and neceſſary, as to thoſe whoſe office it is to inſtruct mankind in their duty towards God,

* Prodit enim ſe, quamlibet cuſtodiatur, ſimulatio: nec unquam tanta fuerit eloquendi facultas, ut non titubet, ac hæreat, quoties ab animo verba diſſentiunt. Vir autem malus aliud dicat neceſſe eſt, quam ſentiat. Bonos nunquam honeſtus ſermo deficiet. Quinct. lib. 12.

† Evolvendi penitus auctores qui de virtute præcipiunt, ut oratoris vita cum ſcientia divinarum rerum ſit humanarumque conjuncta.

‡ Sicut enim hæc vis, quæ ſcientiam complexa rerum ſenſa mentis & conſilia ſic verbis explicet, ut eos qui audiant, quocunque incubuerit, poſſit impellere; quæ quo major eſt vis, hoc eſt magis cum probitate jungenda ſummaque prudentia: quarum virtutum expertibus ſi dicendi copiam tradiderimus, non eos quidem oratores effecerimus, ſed furentibus quædam arma dederimus. De orat. lib. 1.

Oratorem autem niſi qui ſapiens eſſet eſſe neminem. Equidem omnia, quæ pertinent ad uſum civium, morem hominum, quæ verſantur in conſuetudine vitæ, in ratione reipublicæ, in hac ſocietate civili, in ſenſu hominum communi, in natura, in moribus, comprehendenda eſſe oratori puto. Ib. l. 2.

and

and towards man? The power of * perſuaſion and moving the paſſions is the next talent required, without which all others are vain. And who can have more occaſion for this than he, whoſe buſineſs it is to prevail upon ſenſual men not to indulge themſelves in ſenſual gratifications; and to perſuade the eager and ſhort-ſighted, to forego a preſent and near advantage for one which is at a diſtance and out of their ſight: Or how can he diſcharge his duty of regulating the paſſions, without having a power over thoſe paſſions? In ſhort, every thing which regards either the end or the means, the office or the talents, of a perfect orator, will be found in the moſt exact and circumſtantial manner to be included in the proper diſcharge of the profeſſion of holy orders. Let the following paſſages be applied to that, and ſee how perfectly they are ſuited to it.

† 'Tis the orator's part to give advice upon 'the moſt important affairs, and to deliver his

 'ſenti-

* Orator eſt, qui accommodate ad perſuadendum poſſit dicere. Omnis vis ratioque dicendi, in eorum, qui audiunt, mentibus aut ſedandis, aut excitandis, expromenda eſt. De orat. l. 1.

† Hujus eſt in dando conſilia de maximis rebus, cum dignitate explicata ſententia; ejuſdem & languentis populi incitatio, & effrænati moderatio. Eâdem facultate fraus hominum ad pernicien, & integritas ad ſalutem vocatur. Quis cohortari ad virtutem ardentius, quis a vitiis acrius revocare? Quis vituperare improbos aſperius, quis laudare bonos ornatius? Quis cupiditatem

'ſentiments with clearneſs and dignity. 'Tis 'his to rouze people from languor, and to re-'ſtrain the impetuous within due bounds. 'Tis 'his to paſs ſentence of deſtruction on falſhood, 'and of ſafety on truth. Who with more ar-'dour than he can inflame men to virtue, who 'with more force can recall them from vice? 'Who has more power to brand the wicked with 'diſgrace, who can better adorn the good with 'praiſe? Who has more ſkill in curbing head-'ſtrong deſire, who can more gently adminiſter 'the balm of comfort to the afflicted?'

* 'Eloquence treats of the duties of life. Eve-'ry one applies to himſelf what he hears, and 'our minds attend with moſt eaſe to points in 'which they have ſome concern.'

† 'It is the peculiar property of an orator to 'be maſter of a grave and poliſhed ſtyle, adapted 'to the ſenſes and underſtandings of his hearers.'

Would not one imagine that this picture was drawn from the pulpit, and could belong to nothing but the office of a good preacher? Yet the following paſſage is ſtill more immediately appli-

cupiditatem vehementius frangere accuſando poteſt, quis mœrorem levare mitius conſolando? De orat. lib. 2.

* Omnis eloquentia circa opera vitæ eſt, ad ſe refert quiſque quæ audit, id facillime accipiunt animi quod agnoſcunt. Quinct. l. 8. de orat. l. 1.

† Hoc enim eſt proprium oratoris, quod ſæpe jam dixi, oratio gravis, & ornata, & hominum ſenſibus ac mentibus accomodata.

cable

cable to it. * 'I lay it down as a maxim, that 'on the ſkill and wiſdom of a complete orator 'not only his own perſonal dignity, but the wel-'fare of many individuals, and the ſafety of the 'whole ſtate in a great meaſure depend.'

Theſe deſcriptions of perfect oratory were not drawn from the life, or what really did exiſt, but from an † image formed in the minds of the writers, and which might exiſt. That it might exiſt, Cicero ſeems to be clearly of opinion, when he puts a reaſon into the mouth of Antonius why it had not then appeared. ‡ 'If that be difficult 'for us to obtain, becauſe before we are well in-'ſtructed in the art of ſpeaking, we are ſpurred 'on by an eager ambition of appearing in public, 'it has notwithſtanding a foundation in the nature 'of things.' But Cicero himſelf attributes the want of perfection in oratory entirely to it's ſepa-ration from philoſophy. § 'What ſhall I ſay of

* Sic enim ſtatuo, perfecti oratoris moderatione, & ſapientia, non ſolum ipſius dignitatem, ſed privatorum plurimorum, & univerſæ reipublicæ ſalutem maxime contineri.

† Ego enim quid deſiderem, non quid viderim diſputo: redeoque ad illam Platonis, de qua dixeram, rei formam & ſpeciem, quam etſi non cernimus, tamen animo tenere poſſumus. Cic. de orat.

‡ Id ſi eſt difficile nobis, quod antequam ad dicendum ingreſſi ſimus, obruimur ambitione & foro, ſit tamen in re poſitum atque natura.

§ Quid dicam de natura rerum, cujus cognitio magnam oratoris ſuppeditat copiam, de vita, de officiis, de virtute,

'the knowlege of nature, an acquaintance with 'which ſupplies large ſtores to oratory in treating of the duties of life, of virtue, of morals, 'that it can be either deſcribed or underſtood 'without a great deal of inſtruction in thoſe very 'points? To theſe qualifications of ſuch great 'conſequence are to be added numberleſs other 'accompliſhments, which were formerly taught 'only by thoſe who were reckoned maſters of the 'art of ſpeaking. So that no one can now attain 'that true and perfect eloquence, becauſe the 'ſchools of philoſophy are ſeparated from the 'ſchools of oratory, and becauſe a knowlege of 'things is taught by one, of language by another.' Yet however difficult it might be rendered on this account, he did not doubt but that where great talents and great application were met in the ſame perſon, a complete orator might ariſe. To this effect he has given a ſpeech to Antonius, that hath ſomewhat the air of prophecy, and in which he ſeems to have ſhadowed out himſelf. * 'As far as I can conjecture from the genius

virtute, de moribus, ſine multa earum ipſarum rerum diſciplina, aut dici, aut intelligi poſſe? Ad has tot, tantaſque res, adhibenda ſunt ornamenta innumerabilia, quæ ſola tum quidem tradebantur ab iis qui dicendi numerabantur magiſtri. Quo fit ut veram illam & abſolutam eloquentiam nemo conſequatur, quod alia intelligendi, alia dicendi diſciplina eſt, & ab aliis verborum doctrina quæritur.

* Ego enim quantum auguror conjectura, quantaque ingenia in noſtris hominibus eſſe video, non deſpero fore

'nius of our countrymen, I do not deſpair but 'that ſome time or other a perſon may ariſe, 'who with more intenſe ſtudy, with greater lei-'ſure, and brighter faculties than ours for learn-'ing, and alſo with more laborious induſtry, af-'ter applying himſelf entirely to hearing, read-'ing, and compoſition, may prove ſuch a kind 'of orator as we are in ſearch of: one who may 'with juſtice be called not only a good ſpeaker, 'but a man of accompliſhed eloquence.' Here it is obſervable, that he was ſo far from thinking that ſuch perfection in oratory ſhould either become common or frequent, that he conſiders it only as a *rara avis*, and ſeems to confine the ſpecies, like that of the phœnix, to an individual. But Quinctilian is more enlarged in his notions; for in ſpeaking on this ſubject, when he wiſhes that oratory may regain it's priſtine dignity and power, by being reſtored to it's poſſeſſions in philoſophy, tho' he alſo ſpeaks in the ſingular number, yet it is clear he means that he wiſhes ſome ſuperior order might hereafter be eſtabliſhed, with whom oratory being moſt neceſſary ſhould hold the firſt rank, and philoſophy be conſidered only as her handmaid. That by the authority of this

fore aliquem aliquando, qui & ſtudio acriore, quam nos ſumus atque fuimus, & otio ac facultate diſcendi majore ac maturiore, & labore atque induſtria ſuperiore, cum ſe ad audiendum, legendum, ſcribendum que dederit, exiſtat talis orator, qualem quærimus: qui jure non ſolum diſertus, ſed etiam eloquens dici poſſit. De orat. l. 1.

order their ſeveral claims ſhould be adjuſted, and the odious diſtinction of names be deſtroyed. That neither ſhould any longer pretend to the ſovereign authority, but both in due ſubordination ſerve one common maſter. 'Utinamque ſit tem-'pus unquam, quo perfectus aliquis (qualem op-'tamus) orator hanc partem † ſuperbo nomine, '& vitüs quorundam bona ejus corrumpentium 'inviſam, vindicet ſibi, ac velut rebus repetitis 'in corpus eloquentiæ adducat.' To the perfection of ſuch an orator, he thought the following points requiſite. 'Evolvendi penitus auctores qui 'de virtute præcipiunt, ut oratoris vita cum ſcien-'tia divinarum rerum ſit humanarumque con-'juncta. Quæ ipſæ quanto majores ac pulchri-'ores viderentur, ſi illas ii docerent, qui etiam 'eloqui præſtantiſſime poſſunt. Non enim foren-'ſem quandam inſtituimus operam, nec mercé-'nariam vocem, nec (ut aſperioribus verbis par-'camus) non inutilem ſane litium advocatum, 'quem denique cauſſidicum vulgo vocant: ſed 'virum cum ingenii natura præſtantem, tum vero 'tot pulcherrimas artes mente complexum, da-'tum tandem rebus humanis, qualem nulla an-'tea vetuſtas cognoverit, ſingularem, perfectum-'que undique, optima ſentientem, optimeque di-'centem.' How would it rejoice the heart of Quinctilian could he have ſeen his wiſh accom-

† Nomen tamen ſibi inſolentiſſimum arrogaverunt, ut ſoli philoſophi ſapientiæ ſtudioſi vocarentur. Quinct. lib. 1.

pliſhed

pliſhed in the eſtabliſhment of an order of men, *to whom a perfect knowlege of all things, divine and human, was neceſſary, to ſhine forth, not only in their words, but in their lives?* An order, *ſuch as no antiquity ever beheld*, which uniting in itſelf the full powers of oratory and philoſophy in their largeſt extent, ſhould enable men to communicate *the moſt perfect knowlege in the moſt perfect manner.* With what rapture muſt he have beheld oratory raiſed to an higher office, and a more exalted rank than ever it could even claim before; no longer miniſtring to the purpoſes of mere mortal and earthly maſters, but immediately employed in the ſervice of the Moſt High, of God himſelf? Whilſt philoſophy, humbled from her proud pretenſions, ſhould be content to miniſter to her former rival. Such an office for oratory could never have entered into the thoughts of an heathen, as the groſs abſurdities of their religion, and ridiculous ideas of their gods, required the obſcurity of myſtery, and dark veil of ſuperſtition, but would by no means bear the light. So that however philoſophy, of the pretended kind at leaſt, might by colluſion be employed in the ſervice of religion, as by it's own darkneſs it might caſt a deeper ſhade over the other, oratory muſt neceſſarily be baniſhed from it's miniſtry, whoſe office it is to throw a ſtrong light upon all which it handles. How would the auguſt union of eloquence and philoſophy with the ſacred office have ſtruck the antients with admiration and aſtoniſhment? And conſidering the greatneſs of their powers when ſe-

parate, what glorious effects would they not expect from the joint endeavours of religion, oratory, and philoſophy, all mutually ſupporting and aſſiſting each other in bringing about the nobleſt ends, the general good of ſociety, and happineſs of each individual? How much higher muſt their expectations be raiſed, when they ſhould conſider the purity of our religion, the unearthly and exalted notions which we entertain of the Deity, and the ſalutary ſyſtem of laws for his conduct in life, promulgated to man by his great Author and Creator? Would not Plato triumph to ſee the day when his prediction was verified, 'that it 'was rather the work of God, than of human 'legiſlators, to provide a ſyſtem of laws relative 'to thoſe great duties, which mens appetites and 'paſſions render difficult?' And when he contemplated not only the fitneſs of the ſyſtem to anſwer the end, but likewiſe the fitneſs of the means to ſupport the ſyſtem, would he not cry out, that what was hitherto beyond the utmoſt reach of human thought, and was hid from the reſearches of the wiſeſt men, could come from God alone? Would not Socrates himſelf think philoſophy raiſed and dignifyed beyond his utmoſt conception, when miniſtring to oratory in ſuch glorious purpoſes? How great muſt Cicero ſuppoſe the virtue of ſuch a people to be, to the ſupport of which he thought the belief of a future ſtate abſolutely neceſſary, when he ſhould find that

that belief eſtabliſhed, not in the minds of a few, but univerſally thro' a whole ſtate; not founded on the weak baſis of reaſon only, but on the immoveable rock of revelation? Would they not all join with one voice to felicitate ſuch a people, and ſay, 'O happy nation! to whom the nobleſt and 'moſt important truths, which were darkly ſeen, 'and as thro' a miſt, by only a few, and thoſe the 'wiſeſt of the heathen world, are revealed in full 'meridian light, and like the ſun viſible to all 'eyes? Like that luminary communicating light 'and heat to all, to the low as well as the high, 'to the weak in underſtanding as well as to 'thoſe of the moſt improved capacities. Who 'need no longer be diſtracted with doubts, and 'waſte your time in fruitleſs debates; to whom 'the laws of right and wrong are clearly laid 'open, and whoſe happineſs depends only upon 'the conformity of your actions to thoſe laws. 'Who may ſafely attend your labours in your ſe-'veral vocations, to obtain what is needful for the 'comforts and the enjoyments of life and when 'you reſt from thoſe neceſſary toils, receive in-'ſtruction with delight, in all that is needful for 'the diſcharge of your ſeveral duties. Happy 'people! who need no longer be confined by the 'fetters of ignorance, or hoodwinked by ſuper-'ſtition, who may be allowed the free uſe of 'your reaſon in religious as well as worldly mat-'ters, ſince there is no danger of your miſtaking 'the road, when you have ſuch knowing and un-

'erring guides. And you, ye holy men! highly
'favoured of heaven above all others, in whoſe
'divine inſtitution are united all the greateſt
'powers which God has given to man, and which
'alone could make you worthy of his ſervice, let
'us with love and admiration contemplate the
'beauty of your ſacred function, and with won-
'der and delight examine it's ſtupendous frame!
'Happy men, whoſe order muſt command re-
'ſpect and reverence to your perſons, whoſe ta-
'lents muſt conciliate to you the eſteem and love
'of mankind! Employed from your earlieſt days
'in treaſuring up knowlege and wiſdom, not to lie
'concealed like the miſer's hoard, but to be diſ-
'played to the eyes of men, enriching the be-
'holders, without impoveriſhing yourſelves, and
'by the very act of communication increaſing,
'not diminiſhing, your ſtore. Free from the
'anxious purſuits of life, and ſupported by the la-
'bour of others, your whole time may be em-
'ployed in miniſtring to the glory of him whoſe
'ſervice is perfect freedom, and in promoting
'the welfare of your fellow creatures, in eſtabliſh-
'ing peace and good-will amongſt men. Thrice
'happy orators, who enjoy all the delight, the
'praiſe, the perfection of your art, without the
'difficulties, the labours, the dangers that attend-
'ed it of old! You need no pains to procure ſi-
'lence, no arts to engage attention; the ſanctity
'of the temple enſures the one, the importance
'and intereſting nature of the ſubject to all hear-
'ers

'ers commands the other. Secure in your ce-
'leſtial armour, tho' you attack the wicked with
'force and might, you need fear no enemies;
'and the Philips and Anthonies of the world
'may be laſhed by you without danger. Con-
'fined to labour on no barren or unimportant
'ſubjects, you have the whole univerſe for your
'theme, whatever belongs to divine or human
'nature, to ſpiritual or material exiſtence. In
'treating of theſe, the paſt becomes as the pre-
'ſent, and the future is anticipated. Your an-
'ceſtors ſupply you with knowlege, poſterity with
'arguments; the collected wiſdom of ages is
'your magazine, and all nature your ſtore-houſe.
'But more particularly for your uſe was that book
'of light ſent into the world, wherein the God-
'head has diſplayed himſelf in as ample a manner
'as could be comprehended by mortal capacities.
'Nor were leſs ſupplies neceſſary to treat on ſuch
'ſubjects, as the wonderful attributes of the
'Deity, the ſocial duties of man, and the glorious
'proſpect of a future ſtate of exiſtence. How
'muſt the hearts of your hearers glow within
'them, when the whole force of knowlege
'and eloquence are united upon ſuch important
'topics? and how muſt their love, admiration,
'and gratitude burn towards you their teachers
'and benefactors, whoſe whole labours are em-
'ployed to their profit and delight? With us the
'charms of oratory alone were ſufficient to procure
'praiſe, fame, affection, and eſteem to it's pro-
'feſſors

'feſſors; and what could be more natural than
'that theſe ſhould neceſſarily attend an art,
'which in it ſelf contained the powers of all thoſe
'which can moſt captivate the heart, and allure
'the mind of man. * For what ſong could be
'more charming to the ear, than the well-modu-
'lated voice of the ſpeaker, or what tones could
'more intimately penetrate the heart than thoſe
'of nature ſtriking on the kindred chords? What
'numbers of the poet could be more delightful,
'wherein art is perpetually viſible, than the tune-
'ful cadence of a well-turned period, which
'ſeems to come from nature's own hand? What
'actor can be more pleaſing in the feigned imita-
'tion of truth, than the orator in the repreſen-
'tation of truth itſelf? How much greater force
'muſt theſe have with you, when employed to ſo
'noble an end? Equal to us in all the arts of cap-
'tivating the ſenſes, how much more lordly is
'your ſway over the imagination and the paſſions?
'What vigorous flights may you not lead fancy,
'when freed from the fetters of matter, thro'
'ſpiritual regions, and a boundleſs eternity, till
'this world ſhall appear but as a ſpeck, and it's
'duration but as a point of time? How infinitely
'more powerful muſt the exertions of hope and

* Qui enim cantus moderatæ orationis pronantiatione dulcior inveniri poteſt? quod carmen artificioſa verborum concluſione aptius? qui actor in imitanda, quam orator in ſuſcipienda veritate jucundior? Cic. de orat. l. 2.

'fear

'fear be, in proportion to the immenſity of their 'object? What were the conqueſts of Alexander 'or Cæſar compared to yours? Theirs were over 'men, over their brethren: yours are over the 'enemies to human nature, over ſin, and over 'death.'

But ſhould theſe ſages of antiquity be informed that things were quite otherwiſe, that vice and libertiniſm were never known to have arrived at a greater pitch in any country, that virtue was neglected or ridiculed, and religion, far from anſwering it's end, was together with the prieſthood held in contempt; muſt they not either conclude, that the people were the moſt ſtupid and hardened in the world, or that they who were dedicated to the ſervice of the church were not qualified to diſcharge their office. When they ſhould be told, that no order ever produced ſuch numbers of men diſtinguiſhed for knowlege and wiſdom, remarkable for purity of morals and ſanctity of life; that their diſcourſes in the cauſe of virtue and religion, were the nobleſt productions that ever came from the wit of man; they would be apt to ſuffer the former opinion to take place. But ſhould they be informed, that in the education of theſe men great care was taken to inſtruct them in philoſophy, and to ſtore their minds with all ſorts of knowlege, but none at all about the art of communicating theſe to others by ſpeech; that ſo far from training them in the ſtudy and practice of oratory, their very

firſt

firſt principles of ſpeaking were corrupted by the moſt ignorant teachers, and that this error was never afterwards amended; that in conſequence of this they delivered the words of truth in the tones of fiction, and were ſo far from delighting, that they diſguſted their hearers, the whole wonder would at once vaniſh. They would then ſee that the prieſthood was no longer that powerful order which they had imagined, and would conſider it in the ſame ſituation as a man whoſe intellects were ſound, and outward form of body perfect, but who, being deprived of the uſe of his limbs, was incapable of ſerving himſelf or others.

Indeed it is ſo evident that the proper arms for the uſe of the members of the church militant here on earth, for the ſoldiers in Chriſt, can be drawn from no ſtores but thoſe of oratory, that it is aſtoniſhing how it could poſſibly be ſo entirely neglected. Nor can this fault be at all imputed to the clergy, but to their education. We may as well blame the Chineſe women for want of the perfect uſe of their limbs in walking, as thoſe for want of power in ſpeaking. When they enter upon the diſcharge of their duty, they may be ſenſible of the defect, but can find no remedy. The bad habits they have acquired can not be removed, but by the diligent aſſiſtance of ſkilful perſons, and none ſuch are to be found. This was the true reaſon why ſo many eminent divines were obliged to have recourſe to arms, in the exerciſe

exerciſe of which they had been trained, and to deſert thoſe whoſe uſe they had never been taught; and it was neceſſity which reduced them to employ the weaker means of writing to ſupport their cauſe, inſtead of the more powerful aſſiſtance of oratory.

CHAP. XVI.

Ill conſequences of this defect both to church and ſtate; and the great advantages which would reſult to both from the ſtudy of oratory.

THIS defect in the education of thoſe deſtined to holy orders was a fundamental error at the reformation: and from that fatal overſight, and an unhappy miſtake in the eſtabliſhment for the ſupport of the clergy, may be dated the downfall of religion, and decay of chriſtian piety. When the exorbitant wealth and temporal power of the church, together with a tyrannical authority exerciſed over the minds of men, called aloud for a reformation, great care ſhould have been taken not to have carried matters into extremes. Tho' it was right to ſtrip her of her ſuperfluities, and her almoſt princely territories, yet it was neceſſary ſhe ſhould have a competency, and that her income ſhould be independent. And in proportion as ſhe was deprived of that power, which abſurdly demanded a blind obedience to her will, ſhe ought to have been furniſhed with all the

arts

arts of perſuaſion, without which ſhe could no longer be of uſe. What project of Satan's could have more effectually ſown the ſeeds of perpetual diſcord between the clergy and laity, than giving the former an annual claim upon the latter of a tenth part of their ſubſtance? And with what reluctance muſt they who earn their bread with the ſweat of their brow part with ſo much of the fruit of their toils, for ſo little value received? For, being no longer hood-winked by ſuperſtition, but ſeeing thro' the clear light of reaſon, they would find that the obſervation of a few forms and ceremonies was all that they generally got for their money, and their very religion pointed out to them to ſet little value upon thoſe. They would often have occaſion to obſerve, that theſe forms and ceremonies were mechanically gone thro' by a poor drudge at thirty or forty pounds per ann. and ſometimes at leſs, and conſequently would look at what was given over and above as ſuperfluous; not as given to the holy office, but to ſupport the pride and luxury of mere temporal men. In this view it is no wonder that the profeſſion itſelf ſhould come to be hated, and that the bulk of mankind ſhould conſider it as a burthen. The ſame cauſe would naturally produce the ſame effect in regard to any other profeſſion. For let us ſuppoſe, that people were obliged to contribute a certain proportion of their income to the ſupport of lawyers, and phyſicians, for the preſervation of their properties, and their healths; and this

was

was to be levied on all without diſtinction; on thoſe whoſe titles to their eſtates were clear and uncontroverted, and on as ſuch enjoyed a perfect ſtate of health, as well as on thoſe whoſe right was diſputable, and ſuch as laboured under diſorders; and that men were not at liberty to chuſe their own lawyer, or phyſician, but to make uſe of ſuch as were appointed for them, whether ſkilful or not; what an outcry muſt not of courſe be raiſed againſt thoſe profeſſions, and how unreaſonable would men think the burthen impoſed on them? This argument will hold equally ſtrong in regard to thoſe who look upon the church only as a civil inſtitution. And nothing but a perfect diſcharge of their duty in the clergy can make the bulk of mankind conſider it in any other light. As therefore a diſlike and hatred of the whole order were deeply rooted in the ſelf-intereſt of mankind, and a ſtrong prejudice againſt the doctrines they preached in their paſſions; what could poſſibly enable the prieſthood to ſupport their holy cauſe, but the powers of perſuaſion, and the talents of conciliating men's love and gratitude to themſelves, from the delight and profit which they ſhould receive from their labours? Or how could they expect to prevail upon their hearers to embrace doctrines ſo oppoſite to their paſſions, and reduce them to practice, unleſs they ſhould have power to control thoſe paſſions, and to intereſt ſuch as are moſt powerful over the

mind

mind on their ſide? This ought therefore to have been chiefly attended to at the reformation, and a new method of education eſtabliſhed for ſuch as were to be guardians to the new church; wherein the practice and exerciſe of the only weapons which could poſſibly defend it ſhould have chiefly employed their time. But in changes it ſeldom happens that a due medium is obſerved; the paſſions being generally more concerned in bringing them about than reaſon; men in avoiding one extreme for the moſt part run into another. So fared it in regard to the church at the time of the reformation. They were ſo buſy and eager to deſtroy her exorbitant power, that they reduced her to a deplorable ſtate of weakneſs. They were ſo jealous of the former uſurped authority of the prieſts, that they did not care to truſt them with any at all. And indeed there was hardly any thing left to the function but the name, and in general a poor ſubſiſtence grudgingly paid, the ſource of perpetual ill-will from thoſe who parted with it. They were not content with deſtroying her lofty citadel and high towers of ſtrength, they likewiſe razed her walls, and left her open and naked to the world, appointing only a few watchmen for her protection without arms, or diſcipline; who retaining nothing but the odious name of her former miniſters, without their power, were more likely to invite than to repel an attack. Is it any wonder that thus circumſtanced her deſtruction ſhould ſoon be accompliſhed?

liſhed? Accordingly we find that it was brought about in a ſhort ſpace of time. It is well worth obſerving what means and inſtruments were employed on this occaſion. The appearance of religion was aſſumed to deſtroy the reality; and the weapons which ought to have been employed in defence of the church were made uſe of with ſucceſs in pulling it down. Political ſects aroſe, under the name and colour of religious, who had recourſe to the arms of oratory, neglected and diſuſed by the eſtabliſhed miniſtry. 'Tis true, they handled them unſkilfully, with relation to their true uſe, but with art enough to anſwer their own ends. As truth was not in their cauſe, neither was it in their eloquence. Their buſineſs was not to apply to the underſtanding, or to the paſſions, thro' the heart, which could be only done by rational and natural means, but to work upon the fancy and imagination, by the enthuſiaſtic notions of the operations of the ſpirit. To anſwer this end, canting and frantic geſtures might be more forcible than the beſt regulated oratory; for the leſs natural the tones, and the leſs human the looks and geſtures might appear, the more in the eyes of a fanatic multitude would they ſeem to be divine inſpirations, and the workings of the ſpirit. This was only a revival of the artifice of thoſe prieſts who delivered the oracles of old. However unnatural this mode of eloquence might be, yet it was much more forcible than that dull inſipid one adopted by the eſtabliſhed miniſtry, as

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it at leaſt rouzed the attention, and kept the ſenſes awake. And the emotions with which their diſcourſes were delivered had alſo this effect on vulgar hearers, of making them think the preachers in earneſt; a point of all others the moſt likely to give them weight. It is no wonder therefore, that the very form itſelf ſhould daily make proſelytes to their worſhip, ſince it may be doubted whether all the paſſions together have greater power over the mind of man than enthuſiaſm alone. The leaders of ſuch a ſect living in a conſtant habit of diſſimulation muſt of courſe acquire the art of ſeeming thoroughly poſſeſſed themſelves of the opinions which they broached, and conſequently the greateſt power of perſuading others into the ſame. The abbè Du Bos, in his Critical reflections, &c. has a paſſage remarkably applicable to the caſe in point. 'Of all the talents proper for raiſing man to a ſtate of empire and command, a ſuperiority of wit and knowlege is not the moſt effectual; 'tis the art of moving men as one pleaſes; an art that is acquired principally by a perſon's ſeeming to be moved, and penetrated with thoſe very ſentiments he intends to inſpire. 'Tis the art of being like Catiline, *Cujuſlibet rei ſimulator*, which you may call if you pleaſe, the art of being a compleat actor. Thoſe amongſt the Engliſh that are beſt acquainted with the hiſtory of their own country do not mention the name of Oliver Cromwell with the ſame admiration,

'miration, as the generality of that nation; 'they are far from allowing him that extenſive, 'penetrating, ſuperior genius, with which ſo 'many are pleaſed to honour him. They re-'duce therefore his whole merit to his bravery, 'as a ſoldier, and to a peculiar talent of ſeem-'ing penetrated with the ſentiments he had a 'mind to feign, and appearing moved with thoſe 'paſſions he deſired to inſpire, as if he had 'really felt them himſelf. Thurloe, they ſay, 'inſtructed him occaſionally what perſons he 'was to prevail upon in order to make his 'project ſucceed, and in what manner it was 'proper to attack them; juſt as one would tutor 'a woman that is to be employed in acting 'ſome character of importance. Oliver ſpoke 'to them afterwards in ſo pathetic a manner, 'as to bring them over to his party.'

Here we may ſee that the moſt forcible part of oratory was employed in the deſtruction of the church and ſtate, and conſequently may judge how neceſſary it is for their ſupport.

St. Auſtin, in his fourth book on the chriſtian doctrine, recommends and enforces the ſtudy and practice of it to all in holy orders by the ſtrongeſt arguments. 'Since it is by the 'art of rhetoric that people are enabled to eſta-'bliſh true and falſe opinions, who ſhall dare 'ſay that truth ſhould be without arms in the 'perſons of thoſe who are to defend it againſt 'falſhood? Can it be believed that thoſe who

'endeavour

'endeavour to enforce a falſe doctrine ſhould be 'ſkilled in the art of conciliating to themſelves 'the good will and attention of their hearers 'by their addreſs, and that thoſe who ſupport 'the cauſe of truth ſhould not be poſſeſſed of 'this ſkill? That the one ſhould ſpeak of what 'is falſe with brevity and veriſimilitude, and the 'other ſhall diſcourſe of what is true, in ſo te-'dious, diſguſting, and unnatural a manner, as 'to give pain to the hearers, and make them 'think their doctrines not credible; that thoſe 'ſhould combat truth with falſe arguments, and 'eſtabliſh their falſe opinions, and that theſe 'ſhould neither be capable of defending what 'is true, nor of confuting what is falſe; that 'the former ſhould have ſuch power over the 'minds of their hearers as to lead them whi-'ther they pleaſe, that they excite in them 'aſtoniſhment, ſadneſs, or joy, that they ſhould 'animate, move, and turn them as they think 'proper; and that the latter ſhould remain cold, 'unaffecting, and without power? Who can be 'ſo abſurd as to admit ſo extravagant a thought? 'Since therefore eloquence, which has a pro-'digious power in perſuading people either to 'falſe or true opinions, lies open to all who 'are inclined to make uſe of it, what can be 'the reaſon that the good do not employ them-'ſelves in acquiring an art ſo neceſſary for the 'defence of truth? Eſpecially when 'tis con-'ſidered that the wicked uſe it with ſucceſs in

'defending

'defending injuſtice, in eſtabliſhing error, and 'in accompliſhing their pernicious deſigns.'

Here it may be obſerved, that there is no argument urged to enforce the ſtudy of eloquence for the uſe of the pulpit, which is not equally cogent in regard to the ſenate-houſe and the bar.

Indeed the neceſſity of it to all three is ſo very manifeſt to any one, who reflects ever ſo little upon the point, that it might be judged a waſte of time to have dwelt ſo long upon this topic, did not the total neglect of it, and a general deficiency, conſequential from that, warrant an opinion, that it has either not been conſidered ſufficiently by thoſe whoſe buſineſs it is, or that it has not appeared to them to be of ſo important a nature as is here pretended.

But it may be aſked, ſuppoſing the great uſe, importance, and neceſſity of this art were eſtabliſhed in their utmoſt extent, beyond all poſſibility of doubt or cavil, it may be aſked, I ſay, how is it to be acquired? The Romans have pointed out the way, and their example is a ſufficient light to guide us. Cicero, when he gives a definition of this art, in the ſame ſentence points out the means to attain it. * 'Elocution 'is a graceful management of the voice, coun-

* Pronunciatio eſt vocis, & vultus, & geſtus moderatio cum venuſtate. Hæc omnia tribus modis aſſe qui poterimus: arte, imitatione, exercitatione.

'tenance,

'tenance, and geſture.' It is to be acquired as all other arts are, by precept, by example, by practice. 'Till theſe means were tried, we find that oratory was at a very low ebb in Rome. It had only a comparative excellence ariſing from the different degrees of the natural requiſites in the ſpeakers. We find Antonius, who immediately preceded Cicero, peremptorily pronouncing, that tho' he knew ſome who were good ſpeakers, he knew not one worthy of the name of orator His teſtimony is the more to be relied on, as he was himſelf eſteemed one of the firſt orators of the age. * 'I was of that opinion, 'when I ſaid in a book which I publiſhed, that 'I had known ſome good ſpeakers, but no good 'orator: for I called him a good ſpeaker, who 'had ingenuity and clearneſs of expreſſion ſuffi- 'cient to paſs well amongſt men of moderate 'judgement; but would allow none to be a good 'orator, but ſuch a one alone who ſhould be 'able in an admirable and exalted manner to 'amplify and enrich his ſubject: who had ſtored

* Tumque ego, hac eadem opinione adductus, ſcripſi etiam illud quodam in libello, diſertos me cognoſſe nonnullos, eloquentem adhuc neminem: quod eum ſtatuebam diſertum, qui poſſit ſatis acute atque dilucide apud mediocres homines ex communi quadam hominum opinione dicere; eloquentem vero, qui mirabilius, & magnificentius augere poſſet, atque ornare quæ vellet, omneſque omnium rerum, quæ ad dicendum pertinerent, fontes animo ac memoria contineret.

'his

'his underſtanding and his memory with all the 'treaſures belonging to a perfect ſpeaker.' In this repreſentation, our times may be looked upon as exactly ſimilar to the days of Antonius, and it will be our own fault if the riſing generation do not ſee an age like that which ſucceeded at Rome.

The ſame cauſe would infallibly have the ſame effect. A man of theſe times and of this country may, without any imputation of vanity, or pretence to prophecy, ſay of our countrymen, what Antonius did of his in a paſſage above cited *.

The means by which oratory had riſen to ſuch a pitch of perfection in his days are clearly and concifely laid down by Cicero. † 'After the 'eſtabliſhment of our univerſal empire, when 'the long continuance of peace afforded leiſure 'time, there was ſcarce any young man deſirous 'of glory, who did not apply himſelf with all 'his might to the ſtudy of eloquence. But at 'firſt being ignorant of all principles of the art, 'of the mighty force of practice, and not think-'ing that there were any certain rules to guide

* Vid. p. 100.

† Nam poſteaquam, imperio omnium gentium conſtituto, diuturnitas pacis otium confirmavit, nemo fere laudis cupidus adoleſcens non ſibi ad dicendum ſtudio omni enitendum putavit. Ac primo quidem totius rationis ignari, qui neque exercitationis ullam vim neque aliquod præceptum artis eſſe arbitrarentur, tantum, quantum ingenio & cogitatione poterant, conſequebantur. Poſt autem auditis oratoribus Græcis, cognitiſque eorum literis, adhibitiſque doctoribus, incredibili quodam noſtri homines dicendi ſtudio flagrarunt.

'them, they each of them made what advances 'they could by the ſtrength of their own genius 'only and reflection. But afterwards, when 'they had heard the Greek orators, were made 'acquainted with their learning, and attended 'the lectures of their rhetoricians, it is incre-'dible with what an ardent deſire of the ſtudy 'of eloquence our people were inflamed.' If we had the ſame advantages, if our youth were trained up under maſters equally ſkilful with the Greek rhetoricians in the principles of the art, equally qualified to inſtruct them by precept and example, and to perfect them by practice, ſhall it be doubted whether the Britiſh oratory would arrive at as great a pitch of perfection as the Roman? Britons will hardly yield the palm either to Greece or Rome in point of talents or induſtry; nor have they ever failed to accompliſh their ends in whatever they undertook equally well with them, where their means were of equal force. Shall any one now living ſuppoſe, that Britain is leſs ſtored with men of true genius and ſtrong natural powers for oratory, who has heard a Walpole, a Pulteney, a Cheſterfield, a Granville, a Pitt, a Murray, and many others? or can they conceive that equal talents, cultivated with equal pains, would not produce equal perfection? Are our motives to the ſtudy and practice of this art, or the opportunities of diſplaying it, inferior to theirs? We may ſoon ſee by examining

ing them. * 'They were ſpurred on by the im-
'portance, variety, and multitude of cauſes of all
'kinds, to perfect the knowlege which each had
'acquired in his courſe of ſtudy, by conſtant
'practice, far ſuperior to precept. There were
'alſo at that time, as now, the higheſt rewards
'attending this ſtudy, in point of reputation, of
'riches, and of honours.' May we not with equal truth and as little appearance of vain-glory ſay of our countrymen what Cicero ſaid of his; † 'The
'genius of our people (as may be judged from
'many inſtances) far excelled that of all other
'nations.' And conclude as he does, ‡ 'It is
'therefore very ſurpriſing that in the hiſtory of
'paſt times we find ſo ſmall a number of good
'orators.' His manner of anſwering this queſtion favours more of vanity than truth, and ſeems rather calculated to enhance his own merit, than to give a juſt account of the thing.

* Excitabant eos magnitudo, et varietas, multitudoque in omni genere cauſarum, ut ad eam doctrinam, quam ſuo quiſque ſtudio conſecutus eſſet, adjungeretur uſus frequens, qui omnium magiſtrorum præcepta ſuperaret. Erant autem huic ſtudio maxima, quæ nunc quoque ſunt, propoſita præmia, vel ad gratiam, vel ad opes, vel ad dignitatem. Cic. de orat.

† Ingenia vero (ut multis rebus poſſumus judicare) noſtrorum hominum multum cæteris hominibus omnium gentium præſtiterunt?

‡ Quibus de cauſis quis non jure miretur, ex omni memoria ætatum, temporum, civitatum, tam exiguum oratorum numerum inveniri?

§ 'But there is ſomething more in this than peo-
'ple are aware of; and it ariſes from an ac-
'quaintance with a greater number of arts and
'more various ſtudies than is imagined. For
'when we conſider the crowds of pupils and pre-
'ceptors, the many inſtances of extraordinary
'genius, the infinite variety of cauſes, the noble
'rewards attendant on eloquence, what cauſe
'can be aſſigned for the great ſcarcity of orators,
'but the incredible weight and difficulty of the
'art itſelf?' For tho' we ſhould allow him the full extent of his argument, and acknowlege all that prodigious difficulty in the art which he afterwards diſplays with ſuch eloquence, yet it is evident from fact, that the ſcarcity of orators in Rome previous to his time cannot be accounted for on that principle. It could be owing to nothing but their want of ſtudying it methodically as an art, of which the following is a ſtrong preſumptive proof; that ſoon after it came to be ſtudied in that manner, and made part of the diſcipline of youth, there aroſe a great number of excellent orators, in whom were united all thoſe perfections, the want of which made them refuſe the name to their predeceſſors, whoſe natural

‡ Sed nimirum majus eſt hoc quiddam, quam homines opinantur, & pluribus ex artibus ſtudiiſque collectum. Quis enim aliud in maxima diſcentium multitudine, ſumma magiſtrorum copia, præſtantiſſimis hominum ingeniis, infinita cauſarum varietate, ampliſſimis eloquentiæ propoſitis præmiis, eſſe cauſæ putet, niſi rei quandam incredibilem magnitudinem & difficultatem? Cic. de orat.

abilities

abilities they had no reaſon to judge were at all inferior, but whoſe acquired ſkill was leſs. To corroborate this proof it may be obſerved, that Athens, where this art was made the chief ſtudy, abounded in excellent orators, tho' the other ſtates of Greece, which neglected it, produced none of any name. And that Rome never produced one worthy to be handed down to poſterity by that name, till this method of ſtudy was introduced. The writers upon this ſubject do not even except P. Craſſus, Scipio, Lælius, and the Gracchi. In ſpeaking to this point, Velleius Paterculus ſays, * 'But oratory in all it's 'branches, and the perfection of proſe-writing, 'if we may except Cato (with all due reſpect to 'P. Craſſus, Scipio, Lælius, the Gracchi, Fannius, and Ser. Galba be it ſpoken) blazed out in 'ſuch luſtre in the time of that prince of orators, 'Cicero, that we can be pleaſed with the works 'of but very few before his days, but can admire 'none which were not produced by perſons 'whom he had ſeen, or who had ſeen him.' So that the age of Cicero may be conſidered as the only period of time in which oratory flouriſhed at Rome, and this was the age in which it was firſt taught there as an art. That alone

* At oratio, ac vis forenſis, perfectumque proſæ eloquentiæ decus, ut idem ſeparetur Cato (pace P. Craſſi, Scipioniſque, & Lælii, & Gracchorum, & Fannii, & Ser. Galbæ dixerim) ita univerſa ſub principe operis ſui erupit Tullio, ut delectari ante eum pauciſſimis, mirari vero neminem poſſis, niſi aut ab illo viſum, aut qui illum viderit.

is ſufficient to account for it's never having flouriſhed there before; and that it immediately afterwards fell into decay and ruin, was owing to the change in their conſtitution. It muſt be obvious enough to the moſt common reflection, that oratory could no longer dwell in a place, from which liberty was baniſhed.

That a proper method of inſtruction is neceſſary to bring oratory to any degree of perfection, may be eaſily ſeen by comparing it with any of the arts ſo taught. Suppoſe a man of the greateſt genius for muſic or painting ſhould ſet out upon his own ſtrength, without precept or example, to acquire ſkill and execution in either of thoſe arts, would not a whole life ſpent in the purſuit make a ſmaller progreſs than a ſingle year under a good maſter? And ſhall a greater advance be expected from a man's own labour in an art infinitely more complicated in it's principles, and difficult in it's execution? This is the manner in which Cicero has accounted for it's low ſtate in the time of his predeceſſors: * 'Ac primo quidem totius rationis ignari, qui neque exercitationis ullam 'vim neque aliquod præceptum artis eſſe arbitrarentur, tantum, quantum ingenio & cogitatione poterant, conſequebantur.' Or have we reaſon to ſuppoſe, that if proper maſters were provided to inſtruct them by precept, to model them by example, and perfect them by practice, that the Britiſh youth would not burn with as ardent a deſire as the Roman to furniſh themſelves with

* Vid. p. 121.

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ſo neceſſary an accompliſhment? This is the more likely, as it might be proved from the nature of the Britiſh conſtitution, that their toil and labour in arriving at a ſufficient degree of perfection in this art would not be in any ſort of proportion to thoſe of the antients; that the opportunities of diſplaying it would be more frequent, and upon ſubjects of more importance; and that the rewards, whether of honour or profit, would be as great and certain. Can it be believed in ſuch a caſe, that the young nobleman, born to be one of the legiſlature, or the commoner, who may hope to be elected into that body, or the lawyer, who is to plead at the bar, would not each apply himſelf to the ſtudy of an art, attended with ſuch pleaſure to themſelves as well as to their hearers; and productive of ſuch honour and profit to them in the reſt of their lives? Is it to be thought (ſetting aſide all other conſiderations) that ſelf-intereſt alone would not incite every perſon deſtined for holy orders to procure a talent which he ſhould have as many opportunities of diſplaying, as he performs acts of duty? Would not this be the means of making many of them conſpicuous in life, who now paſs their days in obſcurity, or contempt? Might not ſuch as had abilities to diſtinguiſh themſelves by writing, by the ſtudy of this art, ſtill make their writings more poliſhed and agreeable to the preſent age, as well as more worthy to be tranſmitted to poſterity? And would they not thus be doubly armed in defence of their cauſe? Might

not others, unpoſſeſſed of ſufficient talents to make themſelves conſpicuous by writing, ſtill be diſtinguiſhed by the powers of oratory alone, enjoying at leaſt a preſent fame, and doing great ſervice to the preſent generation? Might not powers in preaching be a ſurer means of gaining preferment than talents in writing? And whilſt each received a particular benefit and advantage to himſelf, what luſtre would not their endeavours reflect upon the whole order? And how would the common cauſe be ſupported by their joint labours? If Cicero's opinion be juſt, how many * ornaments might they not add to the whole ſtate? If he thought a ſingle orator of excellence was of ſuch moment to the welfare of the community, how much more benefit to the public might be derived from the united force of a number all aiming at the ſame end? How applicable to them would his ſentence be, where he ſays, 'I 'lay it down as a maxim, that on the ſkill and 'wiſdom of a complete orator, not only his 'own perſonal dignity, but the welfare of ma-'ny individuals, and the ſafety of the whole 'ſtate, in a great meaſure depend.' Or if this were applied to ſuch as are in the legiſlature, would it not be equally juſt? The uſe and neceſſity of it to the ſtate in the members of that body are ſo apparent, that they need ſcarce be mentioned. They are the grand council of the nation, and in a multitude of counſellors, it is

* Tantum ego in excellente oratore, & eodem viro bono, pono eſſe ornamenti univerſæ civitati.

De orat. l. 2.

ſaid,

ſaid, there is ſafety. To be a counſellor, it is neceſſary that a man ſhould be able to give counſel? if this be eſſential, how much is the number of ours diminiſhed? How many men of wiſdom and virtue have ſate in that aſſembly, who, from this incapacity to diſcharge their office, were of no more benefit to the public than the meaneſt members in it? How many ſhining talents have been there buried in ſilence, like thoſe of Mr. Addiſon, through a falſe ſhame, ariſing from the want of knowlege and practice in the art of ſpeaking in public? How many perſons of the higheſt abilities, capable of drawing ſenates after them, and giving a turn to debates, have been there hid in the crowd, through this defect, and reduced only to the power of a ſingle voice? Reduced to a ſingle unit, when by the addition of the oratorial powers they might ariſe to an indefinite value. If in the multitude of counſellors there be ſafety, will not the ſtate be in danger, in proportion as their number is reduced? Would it not be eaſier for wicked and deſigning men to accompliſh their ends in that caſe? And when the counſellors of weight and power are but few, might not a confederacy amongſt them eaſily ruin the ſtate? It is not to be ſuppoſed, that ſelfiſh men, who have views oppoſite to the public good, will labour with all their might to acquire the management of a weapon, by which alone they can carry their points, and ſhall the guardians of the public have no arms to oppoſe them? Should we not

in this caſe ſay with St. Auſtin, 'Since there-
'fore eloquence, which has a prodigious power
'in perſuading people either to true or falſe
'opinions, lies open to all who are inclined to
'make uſe of it, what can be the reaſon that the
'good do not employ themſelves in acquiring an
'art ſo neceſſary for the defence of truth? Eſpe-
'cially when it is conſidered, that the wicked
'uſe it with ſucceſs, in defending injuſtice, in
'eſtabliſhing error, and in accompliſhing their
'pernicious deſigns.'

Upon the whole, when it is conſidered that the members of the two moſt neceſſary profeſſions to ſociety, the church and the law, to whoſe care all the ſpiritual and temporal concerns of mankind are committed; and that they who compoſe the grand council of the nation, upon whom the welfare and ſafety of the ſtate depend, can not poſſibly diſcharge their duty without ſkill in ſpeaking, it may be matter of the higheſt aſtoniſhment that this art has never hitherto been ſtudied in Great Britain. Should we hear of any country where the profeſſors of muſic or painting never conſider the principles of their arts, or reduce their practice to rule, but are content to follow ſuch models and patterns as chance has thrown in their way, how ſhould we pity their ignorance, and laugh at their abſurdity? And yet this practice is not ſo contrary to common ſenſe as ours, inaſmuch as the art of which we are ſpeaking is of all others the moſt difficult to be attained without rules; and inaſmuch

as

the want of ſkill in it is attended with the worſt conſequences, and greateſt dangers to the ſtate.

Let us now take a ſhort ſurvey of what has hitherto been done. The principal point in view was to prove, that ſome of the greateſt evils in the ſtate aroſe from a defective education. In order to do this it has been laid down as a maxim, that no ſtate can thrive unleſs the education of youth be ſuited to it's principle. It has been endeavoured to be proved, that no principle could poſſibly ſupport our conſtitution but that of religion; and it has been ſhewn, that religion can not be upheld without ſkill in oratory in it's miniſters. It has been ſhewn alſo, that the knowlege of that art is equally neceſſary in thoſe who compoſe the legiſlative body, and are conſequently the guardians of the ſtate. So far therefore as the ſupport of it's principle is neceſſary to the preſervation of the ſtate, and ſo far as a proper diſcharge of their duty in it's guardians is neceſſary to it's ſafety, ſo far is the ſtudy of oratory eſſential to the very being of the Britiſh conſtitution. Let us now conſider how far it may contribute to it's well-being, and to it's flouriſhing condition. In order to do this, I ſhall in the next place endeavour to ſhew it's uſe in regard to language, and conſequently to knowlege; and afterwards conſider how far it may contribute to the improvement of the liberal arts, and conſequently to politeneſs.

END of the FIRST BOOK.

BRITISH EDUCATION, &c.

BOOK II. CHAP. I.

Of the excellence and uſe of the Greek and Roman languages.

IT was to the care taken in the cultivation of their languages, that Greece and Rome owed that ſplendor, which eclipſed all the other nations of the world. By that they have triumphed over time and oblivion, and ſtill maintain a ſuperiority over all ages, either before or ſince. Other countries may have produced even greater law-givers, commanders, and philoſophers, whoſe inſtitutions, actions, and knowlege, might be far ſuperior to theirs; but they alone had the art of diſplaying thoſe in the beſt light to the world, and of perpetuating them to the end of time. The conqueſts of Ninus, Seſoſtris, Cyrus,

Cyrus, and many more, might have far exceeded thoſe of their greateſt heroes; and yet is it not owing to the Greek language that any traces of them remain, or that even their names are handed down to us?

In the latter ages, what mighty heroes have ariſen, whoſe actions may in themſelves be far ſuperior to any of antiquity? And yet are the great exploits of Odin, Tamarlane, and Almanzor, as well known to the world as thoſe of Alexander and Cæſar? What ſhining and remarkable examples of heroic virtue have not the annals of our chriſtian potentates afforded? Such as Scanderbeg, Henry the fourth of France, Guſtavus Adolphus of Sweden, the Black Prince, and Henry the fifth of our own country, William prince of Orange, founder of the Belgic ſtate, and our ever memorable K. William the third, the preſerver of the liberties of Europe; with many more, who upon a fair compariſon would not yield to the greateſt names of antiquity. And yet are theſe ranked in theſe world in the ſame claſs with Leonidas, Epaminondas, Scipio, Cato, and the army of patriots which the antient writers have drawn out? On the contrary, how little do we know in general of the hiſtory of our own times, tho' that be moſt what imports us, or of the exploits of thoſe to whom we are moſt indebted for the worldly bleſſings we enjoy; whilſt the names and actions even of thoſe who lived in the dark and fabulous ages of the Greek and Roman ſtory are familiar to the mouths of all

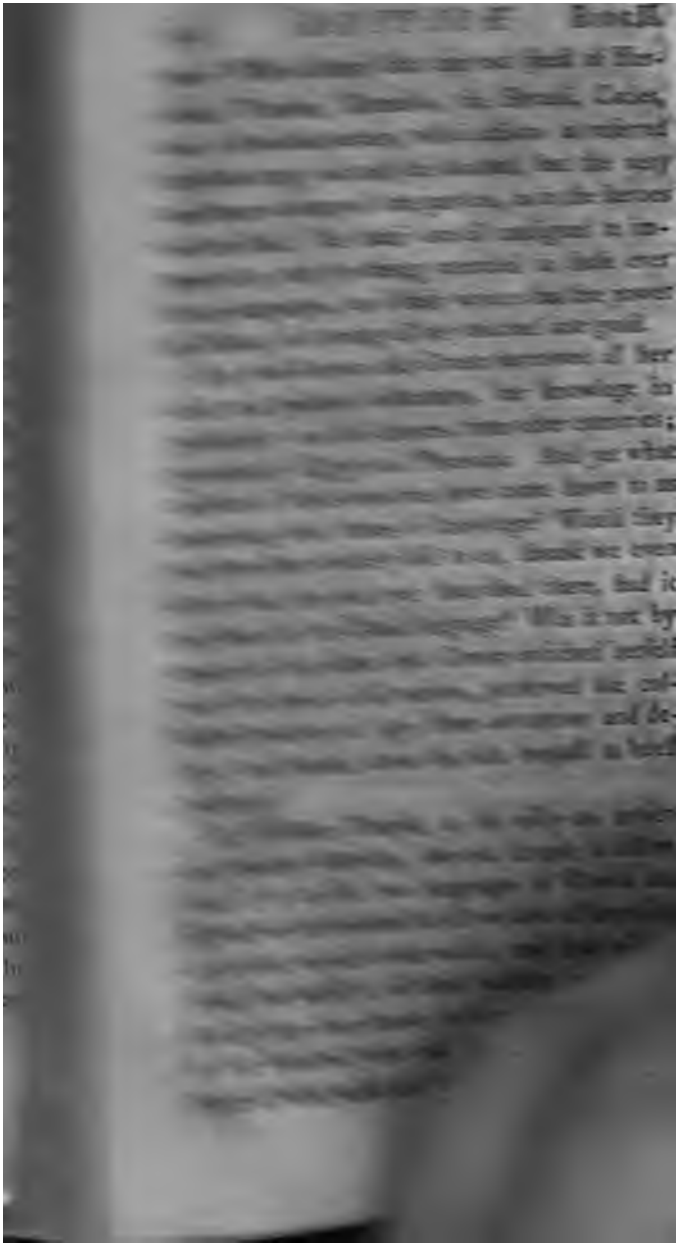
men? Who is there that can not ſpeak of Hercules, Theſeus, Romulus, the Horatii, Cocles, and a thouſand others, whoſe actions as referred to them may not only be doubted, but the very exiſtence of many of the perſons, as in the heroes of the Iliad? Yet theſe are all conſigned to immortality, only by being recorded in thoſe ever living languages, as if their writers had the power of Midas, of turning all they touched into gold.

It is well known that Greece borrowed all her civil and political inſtitutions, her knowlege in philoſophy and the ſciences, from other countries; particularly Ægypt and Phœnicia. And yet what authors of thoſe countries have come down to us containing their ſtores of knowlege? Would they not have been entirely loſt to us, ſhould we even know that they had ever flouriſhed there, had it not been for the Greek language? Was it not by means of that alone that Greece enriched herſelf with the ſpoils of all nations, preſerved the collected treaſures of ages from corruption and decay; and handed down the rich bequeſt to lateſt poſterity?

Sir William Temple, in his eſſay on antient and modern learning, does not ſcruple to affirm, that it is to the two languages of Greece and Rome we are indebted for all we have of learning, or antient records in the world; and that without them the world in all theſe weſtern parts would hardly have been known to have been above five or ſix hundred years old, nor any certainty remain of what paſſed in it before that time.

Muſt

Muſt not the antients therefore have looked upon their language as their greateſt treaſure, which enabled them to hand down ſuch bleſſings together with their own memories, to the end of time; which at once furniſhed them with the means of acquiring and preſerving knowlege, and of diſplaying it in the moſt beautiful and laſting colours; which was the ſource of ſome of their higheſt delights and enjoyments, and one of the greateſt excitements to virtue and praiſe-worthy deeds? For what could more powerfully inflame men with the deſire of performing glorious actions, than the certainty of the gratification of one of the ſtrongeſt paſſions, the love of fame; of having thoſe actions blazon'd to the world not only in their own times, but thro' all future generations? And would not the motives be equally ſtrong in the poets and hiſtorians to record thoſe actions? Thus the hero and the writer mutually aſſiſted each other in their flights; not like the twin brothers, dividing their immortality, but always ſhining together, and mutually reflecting luſtre on each other. What inducement could be ſo ſtrong to writers upon any ſubject to labour at perfection, or what could ſo effectually flatter and encourage them in their toilſome taſk, as the conſideration that the materials with which they wrought were as durable as the world itſelf; which neither the ruſt of time could devour, nor the force of arms deſtroy? It was this which made Horace exulting ſay,



'Exegi monumentum ære perennius.'

And Ovid in the ſame ſtrain,

'Jamque opus exegi, quod nec Jovis ira, nec ignis,
'Nec poterit ferrum, nec edax abolere vetuſtas.'

On the contrary, what diſcouragements muſt thoſe writers lie under, who have only changeable and periſhable materials to work upon? Whoſe fame is circumſcribed as much in ſpace as in time; confined to two iſlands in the one, to a century, or little more, in the other. Can we ſuppoſe that artiſts would take the ſame pains to finiſh carvings in wood, as in braſs or marble? What Dr. Swift has ſaid of our hiſtorians may be applied to our writers in general.

'How ſhall any man, who hath a genius for 'hiſtory, equal to the beſt of the antients, be able 'to undertake ſuch a work with ſpirit and chear-'fulneſs, when he conſiders, that he will be read 'with pleaſure but a very few years, and in an 'age or two ſhall hardly be underſtood without 'an interpreter? This is like employing an ex-'cellent ſtatuary to work upon mouldring ſtone. 'Thoſe who apply their ſtudies to preſerve the 'memory of others will always have ſome con-'cern for their own. And I believe it is for this 'reaſon, that ſo few writers among us, of any 'diſtinction, have turned their thoughts to ſuch 'a diſcouraging employment: for the beſt Engliſh 'hiſtorian muſt lie under this mortification, that

'when

'when his ſtile grows antiquated, he will be only 'conſidered as a tedious relater of facts; and 'perhaps conſulted in his turn, among other 'neglected authors, to furniſh materials for ſome 'future collector.'

It was not then to ſuperior knowlege, ſkill in ſciences, or pre-eminence in virtue, that the Greeks and Romans owed the diſtinguiſhed rank which they have ever held above all other mortals; it was to their language alone, without which the higheſt degree of wiſdom and virtue are as evaneſcent as their poſſeſſors. It is by that only the ſouls of men acquire an immortality even in this world, as by that their ideas appear for ever in equal freſhneſs, and operate with equal force, when their bodies are mixed with the common maſs of matter. * 'All other arts of perpetuating our 'ideas continue but a ſhort time: ſtatues can laſt 'but a few thouſand of years, edifices fewer, and 'colours ſtill fewer than edifices. Michael Angelo, 'Fontana, and Raphael, will hereafter be what 'Phidias, Vitruvius, and Apelles are at preſent, 'the names of great ſtatuaries, architects, and 'painters, whoſe works are loſt. The circum-'ſtance which gives authors an advantage above 'all theſe great maſters is this, that they can 'multiply their originals; or rather can make 'copies of their works to what number they 'pleaſe, which ſhall be as valuable as the origi-'nals themſelves.'

* Spect. No. 166.

The

The ingenious author of the above paſſage has put this matter into the following beautiful light. 'Ariſtotle tells us, that the world is a copy or 'tranſcript of thoſe ideas which are in the mind 'of the firſt Being; and that theſe ideas which 'are in the mind of man are a tranſcript of the 'world: to this we may add, that words are the 'tranſcript of thoſe ideas which are in the mind 'of man, and that writing or printing are the 'tranſcript of words.

'As the ſupreme Being has expreſſed, and as 'it were printed his ideas in the creation, men 'expreſs their ideas in books, which, by this great 'invention of theſe latter ages, may laſt as long 'as the ſun and moon, and periſh only in the 'general wreck of nature. Thus Cowley in his 'poem on the reſurrection, mentioning the de'ſtruction of the univerſe, has thoſe admirable 'lines:

'Now all the wide extended ſky,
'And all th'harmonious worlds on high,
'And Virgil's ſacred work ſhall die.'

Ought it not therefore to be the firſt care of a nation, that is ambitious to diſtinguiſh itſelf in the world, to cultivate and refine their language, and reduce it to a certain ſtandard by which alone a perfect tranſcript of all the great geniuſes born amongſt them can be preſerved, to be a perpetual ornament and ſupport to the ſtate, to furniſh

precepts

precepts and models to all future generations? It is true, that there are but few countries in the world, let them be ever ſo deſirous of it, or uſe ever ſo much pains, which can attain this inеſtimable bleſſing. The original conſtruction of their language often renders it impracticable, and where this is not the caſe, other cauſes interfere. The diamond alone will bear that high poliſh which gives it it's ſuperlative luſtre and extraordinary value; and yet before the art of poliſhing it was diſcovered, the diamond itſelf was of no higher eſtimation than common pebbles. It is certain, that out of the great variety of languages ſpoken by the infinite number of nations with which this globe has been peopled, only two have arrived at ſuch a degree of perfection as to ſurvive thoſe who ſpoke them, ſo as to be a neceſſary part of the ſtudy of all ſuch as had leiſure to apply themſelves to books, and would gain the reputation of being learned. To the perfection of theſe languages there was a concurrence of cauſes, which perhaps had never met before or ſince in any age, or country, *Great Britain alone excepted.* If therefore it can be ſhewn, that all the favourable circumſtances, which conſpired to the refinement and eſtabliſhment of theirs, are rather more ſtrong with us; that the means are equally in our power of rendering it as perfect, as extenſive, and as durable as theirs; would it not be the greateſt abſurdity in us to forego a point thro' want of a little pains, which would be attended with ſuch immediate

immediate advantage and pleaſure to us? And would it not be an unpardonable omiſſion in us to neglect tranſmitting to our ſucceſſors the nobleſt legacy we could bequeath?

Let us examine therefore by what means thoſe two languages arrived at their high degree of perfection, and ſee whether thoſe means are not equally in our power, and would not in all probability be equally effectual with us.

CHAP. II.

That the perfection of the Greek and Roman languages was chiefly owing to the ſtudy and practice of oratory.

THERE can not be a ſtronger preſumptive proof of this, than is at once offered to our view, when we conſider that theſe were the only nations upon earth who ever ſtudied oratory as an art, and that theſe were the only two who ever brought their language to perfection. But in regard to the Roman language we can give a more abſolute proof, as the refinement of that can be aſſigned to no other cauſe. From the time of Romulus to the days of Scipio, it was perpetually varying, as much as the Engliſh has done in an equal ſpace; ſo that at any given period, the language written two centuries before was not intelligible but by antiquarians, till after the Greek rhetoricians had introduced the ſtudy of eloquence.

At

At that time their language was ſtill rude, uncultivated, and barbarous; yet in leſs than fourſcore years from the introduction of that ſtudy, it arrived at the pitch of perfection in which we find it in the Ciceronian age; and which was perhaps incapable of improvement. The Greek indeed is harder to be traced to it's ſource, as neither books nor hiſtory afford us ſufficient lights into the times previous to it's perfection: the oldeſt authentic book handed down to us being that of Homer; ſo that we can form no judgment how long the language had been poliſhed before his time. But even from his writings we may eaſily ſee, that oratory had flouriſhed long before his days, and may therefore with the higheſt probability aſſign it to the ſame cauſe. * 'Homer 'would not have beſtowed ſuch praiſes upon 'Ulyſſes and Neſtor for their eloquence, even at 'the time of the Trojan war, one of whom he 'deſcribes as a nervous, the other as a perſuaſive 'ſpeaker, if eloquence had not even at that time 'been in high repute. Nor could the poet 'himſelf otherwiſe have produced ſuch finiſhed 'ſpeeches, and appeared ſo plainly the orator,'

When it is conſidered that the ſtates of Greece conſiſted for the moſt part of republicks, who

* Neque enim jam Troïcis temporibus tantum laudis in dicendo Ulyſſi tribuiſſet Homerus, & Neſtori, quorum alterum vim habere voluit, alterum ſuavitatem, niſi jam tum eſſet honos eloquentiæ: neque ipſe poeta hic tam idem ornatus in dicendo, ac plane orator fuiſſet.

were

were led and governed by the public ſpeakers, it muſt be allowed that the practice of oratory was almoſt coeval with the ſtates, and conſequently that it muſt have been the chief means of refining their language. Language being the principal weapon of the orator, it was more immediately his concern that it ſhould be well tempered and poliſhed, and made fit for uſe. This will be made more evident upon a view of the points which are eſſential to it's perfection. When language is conſidered as the tranſcript of our ideas, the more perfect a language is, the more exact will the tranſcript be. Language is compoſed of words. In words two things are to be conſidered, ſenſe and ſound. The ſenſe regards the intellectual faculty only, as they are arbitrary marks by which the ideas of one mind are communicated to another. Their ſound regards alone the ſenſitive faculty of hearing, thro' which they are communicated. The ſenſe may therefore be conſidered as the ſoul of words, the ſound as the body. And as in life to make a perfect man there muſt be the '*Mens ſana in corpore ſano*,' the ſame is alſo requiſite to the perfection of language. In both caſes the ſtrong and graceful ſtructure of the body, the perfect uſe of the members, and the aptitude and vigour of the organs, are neceſſary to diſplay the intellect in it's full force and beauty. When language is conſidered in regard to the ſenſe of words, two points are neceſſary, preciſion and copiouſneſs. Preciſion, that the ſame words may raiſe

raiſe the ſame ideas in the minds of the hearers, as are in that of the ſpeaker, otherwiſe he would not be underſtood. Copiouſneſs, that every idea of the mind may have it's mark, otherwiſe a perfect tranſcript of it could not be made. Conſidered in regard to ſound, there are alſo two points of chief moment, diſtinction and agreeableneſs. Diſtinction, that one word thro' a ſimilitude of ſound may not be miſtaken for another, which would confound the ſenſe; agreeableneſs, that attention may be kept up by the pleaſure of hearing, which otherwiſe might grow weary, and in any length of time be diſguſted, as the operation in itſelf is painful. When language is conſidered in this light, to whom are all thoſe points ſo neceſſary as to the orator? To be well underſtood, and heard with delight, are eſſential to him. This could not be unleſs the words he uſed excited the ſame ideas in the minds of his hearers, and unleſs the ſounds of which they were compoſed were agreeable to the ear. Perhaps it may be ſaid, that theſe are as neceſſary to the poets and other writers, as to the orators. To ſuch as recited their works I grant it would, for in that inſtance they apply to the art of oratory. But in regard to ſuch whoſe works are ſubmitted to the eyes of readers, the argument will not hold good. To prove which, amongſt many others that might be offered, the following plain reaſons will be ſufficient. In the firſt place, clearneſs is not ſo abſolutely neceſſary to the writer, for let his language be ever ſo obſcure,

obſcure, his reader may ſtop, and take what time he pleaſes to find out his meaning; whereas it is neceſſary to the orator that his hearer ſhould be able to accompany him, and that what he ſays ſhould be underſtood inthe ſame ſpace of time that it is uttered. Nor is agreeableneſs of ſound ſo neceſſary to the writer as to the ſpeaker, as that is generally ſubmitted to a ſenſe which can not judge of it. The eye can look without pain at many hard uncouth combinations of ſyllables and words, which the tongue could not pronounce but with difficulty, and which would conſequently be diſagreeable to the ear. As therefore we muſt ſuppoſe that all men of the greateſt genius and abilities which Greece produced were neceſſarily intereſted, and employed, in improving, refining, and eſtabliſhing their language, we need not wonder that it was ſoon brought to perfection, and that it laſted with hardly any variation for more than a thouſand years, from Homer to Plutarch, and how long before we know not. One argument to to prove the point ſet forth in the head of this chapter ought not to be omitted, that in Athens, where eloquence and oratory were moſt ſtudied, they were allowed alſo to ſpeak the pureſt and correcteſt language of all Greece.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

That the Greek and Roman languages owed their ſtability and permanence to oratory. With ſome animadverſions upon the neglect of ſtudying the Engliſh language.

THE ſame means, which brought theſe languages to a ſtate of perfection, were alſo neceſſary to preſerve them in that ſtate. As the practice of orators had introduced the ſtudy of language, which was the cauſe of it's refinement, ſo when it was refined to the utmoſt, the neceſſity of continuing the ſtudy of language was greater than before. For the taſte of the people being now much improved and refined, by conſtantly hearing ſuch as ſpoke in the moſt pure and perfect manner, would immediately be ſenſible of the leaſt deviation from what was right, and be offended at any improper tone, or uſe of words in their public ſpeakers. There are many inſtances recorded of their great delicacy in this reſpect. The ſtory of the old Athenian herb-woman and Theophraſtus is well known. * 'That old wo-'man called Theophraſtus (a man in general re-'markable for elocution) a ſtranger, only on ac-

* Quomodo & illa Attica anus Theophraſtum, hominem alioqui diſſertiſſimum, annotata unius affectatione verbi, hoſpitem dixit: nec aliud ſe id deprehendiſſe interrogata reſpondit, quam quod nimium Attice loqueretur. Quintil. l. 8. c. 1.

'count of obſerving in him too nice an exactneſs 'in the pronunciation of a ſingle word; and be- 'ing aſked her reaſon, ſaid ſhe had no other, but 'that he ſpoke too Attically.' Cicero ſays of the Athenians in general, *Atticorum aures teretes & religioſæ.* He ſhews alſo that the Romans in his time were as nice, when he ſays, * 'that in the 'repetition of a verſe the whole theatre was in an 'uproar, if a ſingle ſyllable was pronounced a little 'longer or ſhorter than it ought. Not that the 'crowd was at all acquainted with the quantity of 'poetic feet, or had any notion of numbers; nor 'could they tell what it was which gave them 'offence, or why, or in what reſpect it was a 'fault.' Whence could this ariſe but from that general good taſte infuſed into them by being habituated to hear nothing but what was pure and correct? and how much pains muſt have been taken by ſuch as intended to ſpeak in public, with reſpect to pronunciation, when the leaſt deviation from propriety would be perceived by the meaneſt of the people? Accordingly we find, that, after the care of their morals, this was the principal object of attention in the education of youth, whoſe chief employment was the ſtudy of their own language. The Greeks ſtudied only their own, and conſequently had much labour ſaved. The Ro-

* In verſu quidem theatra tota reclamant, ſi fuit una ſyllaba aut brevior aut longior. Nec vero multitudo pedes novit, nec ullos numeros tenet: nec illud, quod offendit, aut cur, aut in quo offendat, intelligit. De orat.

mans

mans ſtudied the Greek, * but it was only with a view to improvement in the knowlege of their own, which had ever the preference with them, and employed the greateſt part of their time. They took ſuch care with reſpect to pronunciation, that it extended even to their choice of nurſes and ſervants, who were to be about them in their infant age †. What ſhall we ſay then to our practice, ſo contrary to that of thoſe poliſhed nations, which we admire ſo much, and pretend to emulate; who take great pains in ſtudying all languages but our own? Who are very nice and curious in our choice of preceptors for the antient and modern tongues, yet ſuffer our children to be vitiated in the very firſt principles of our own, by committing them to the care of ſome of the moſt ignorant and loweſt of mankind. Is it becauſe that the knowlege of our language is ſo eaſily acquired, that it can ſcarce be miſſed? This ſurely can not be ſaid, when it is

* A ſermone Græco puerum incipere malo, non longe Latina ſubſequi debent, & cito pariter ire. Quint. l. i. c. 2.

† Ante omnia ne ſit vitioſus ſermo nutricibus. Has primum audiet puer, harum verba effingere imitando conabitur. Non aſſueſcat ergo, nedum infans quidem eſt, ſermoni, qui dediſcendus eſt. Multa linguæ vitia, niſi primis eximuntur annis, inemendabili in poſterum pravitate durantur. Si tamen non continget quales maxime velim habere nutrices, pueros, pædagogos; at unus certe ſit aſſiduus, dicendi non imperitus: qui, ſi quæ erunt ab his præſente alumno dicta vitioſe, corrigat protinus, nec inſidere illi ſinat. Quint. l. i. c. 1, & 2.

univerſally allowed, that there are hardly any who ſpeak or write it correctly. Is it becauſe we have leſs uſe for it than any other? Can that be ſuppoſed, when it is the only one uſed upon all important as well as common occaſions of life? When we conſider that after the Greek and Roman languages were brought to a ſtandard of perfection, when their youth had the advantage of eſtabliſhed invariable rules upon which to found their knowlege; of able preceptors to inſtruct and guide them; of the nobleſt examples and moſt perfect patterns for their imitation; that with all theſe aids they ſtill found it neceſſary to apply a great portion of their time in their more adult years, to make themſelves maſters of it; ſhall we, who have none of theſe advantages, without any pains or application expect to have a competent knowlege of one, which in it's preſent ſtate is far more difficult to be learned than theirs? This omiſſion in our education is the more wonderful, whether we conſider the great importance of the point to the ſtate in general, or it's univerſal uſe to all the individuals who compoſe it. Mr. Locke has repreſented and complained of this defect in the ſtrongeſt terms. 'To write and ſpeak correctly gives a grace, and gains a favourable attention to what one has to ſay: and ſince 'tis Engliſh that an Engliſh gentleman will have conſtant uſe of, that is the language he ſhould chiefly cultivate, and wherein moſt care ſhould be taken to poliſh and perfect his ſtyle. To ſpeak or write better Latin than Engliſh may make

'make a man be talked of, but he will find it 'more to his purpoſe, to expreſs himſelf well in 'his own tongue, that he uſes every moment, 'than to have the vain commendation of others 'for a very inſignificant quality. This I find 'univerſally neglected, nor care taken any 'where to improve young men in their own lan-'guage, that they may thoroughly underſtand 'and be maſters of it. If any one among us have 'a facility or purity more than ordinary in his 'mother tongue, it is owing to chance, or his 'genius, or any thing, rather than his education, 'or any care of his teacher. To mind what En-'gliſh his pupil ſpeaks or writes, is below the 'dignity of one bred up amongſt Greek and La-'tin, tho' he have but little of them himſelf. 'Theſe are the learned languages fit only for 'learned men to meddle with and teach; Engliſh 'is the language of illiterate vulgar: tho' yet we 'ſee the polity of ſome of our neighbours hath 'not thought it beneath the public care to pro-'mote and reward the improvement of their own 'language. Poliſhing and enriching their tongue 'is no ſmall buſineſs amongſt them; it hath col-'leges and ſtipends appointed it, and there is 'raiſed amongſt them a great ambition and emu-'lation of writing correctly: and we ſee what 'they are come to by it, and how far they have 'ſpread one of the worſt languages poſſibly in 'this part of the world, if we look upon it as it 'was in ſome few reigns backwards, whatever

'it be now. The great men among the Romans 'were daily exerciſing themſelves in their own 'language; and we find yet upon record, the 'names of orators, who taught ſome of their em-'perors Latin, tho' it were their mother tongue.

'Tis plain the Greeks were yet more nice in 'theirs; all other ſpeech was barbarous to them 'but their own, and no foreign language appears 'to have been ſtudied or valued amongſt that 'learned and acute people; tho' it be paſt doubt 'that they borrowed their learning and philoſo-'phy from abroad.

'I am not here ſpeaking againſt Greek and La-'tin; I think they ought to be ſtudied, and the 'Latin at leaſt underſtood well by every gentle-'man. But whatever foreign languages a young 'man meddles with (and the more he knows the 'better) that which he ſhould critically ſtudy, 'and labour to get a facility, clearneſs, and ele-'gancy to expreſs himſelf in, ſhould be his own, 'and to this purpoſe he ſhould daily be exerciſed 'in it.'

In another place he ſays, 'There can ſcarce 'be a greater defect in a gentleman, than not to 'expreſs himſelf well either in writing or ſpeak-'ing. But yet I think, I may aſk my reader, 'whether he doth not know a great many, who 'live upon their eſtates, and ſo, with the name, 'ſhould have the qualities of gentlemen, who 'can not ſo much as tell a ſtory as they ſhould, 'much leſs ſpeak clearly, and perſuaſively in any 'buſineſs. This I think not to be ſo much their

'faul

'fault as the fault of their education; for I muſt 'without partiality do my countrymen this right, 'that where they apply themſelves I ſee none 'of their neighbours outgo them. They have 'been taught rhetorick, but yet never taught 'how to expreſs themſelves handſomely with 'their tongues or pens in the languages they are 'always to uſe; as if the names of the figures, 'that embelliſhed the diſcourſes of thoſe who un-'derſtood the art of ſpeaking, were the very art 'and ſkill of ſpeaking well. This, as all other 'things of practice, is to be learned not by a few 'or a great many rules given, but by exerciſe 'and application, according to good rules, or 'rather patterns, 'till habits are got, and a faci-'lity of doing it well.'

Mr. Addiſon has many paſſages wherein he lays open, and laments this defect; and it is one of biſhop Berkley's quære's, 'Whether half the 'learning and ſtudy of theſe kingdoms is not 'uſeleſs, for want of a proper delivery and pro-'nunciation, being taught in our ſchools and col-'leges?' Indeed there is not any one of the leaſt underſtanding, who has either wrote or ſpoke upon this ſubject, that has not allowed this ſhame-ful neglect of our own language to be one of the greateſt of our national evils. Is it not therefore aſtoniſhing that no remedy has hitherto been thought of? Would it be credited, were it not warranted by fact, that a poliſhed and rational people ſhould be at great expence of labour, time, and money, to have their children inſtructed in

languages which never can be of any uſe to them in life, and ſeldom even contribute to their pleaſure; whilſt they neglect entirely to have them inſtructed in one which would be of perpetual uſe or ornament to them, in whatever rank or ſtation they were placed, upon matters of the higheſt importance, as well as the common occurrences of life? It may be ſaid by ſome, that being our mother tongue, we have no occaſion to learn it by rule, and that without ſtudy we ſhall of courſe acquire a ſufficient knowlege of it. But is this aſſertion warranted by experience? If the contrary be true; if it muſt be allowed that people are almoſt univerſally deficient both in underſtanding and ſpeaking it, the argument for ſtudying it will be ſo much the ſtronger on account of it's being a mother tongue. Becauſe, if it be generally ill ſpoken, it will not be poſſible but that boys in their childhood, and youths as they go more abroad into the world, muſt habitually fall into errors, and contract bad cuſtoms, which can be remedied by nothing but ſtudy and application. Whereas there is no ſuch danger in any of the other languages, when learned from the mouth of a judicious and ſkilful maſter. There are few ſchools in theſe realms which may not bear teſtimony to the truth of this; for in thoſe it is a common obſervation, that boys are often able to write exerciſes in pure and correct Latin, who at the ſame time can not expreſs their thoughts with the leaſt grace or propriety in their own language.

Indeed it might aſtoniſh any one to think, that we ſhould ſtill perſiſt in ſo groſs an error, who has not

not ſufficiently weighed the force of faſhion, or conſidered the difficulty of making any alteration in national cuſtoms * when they have been once eſtabliſhed. It may therefore be worth while to trace this defect to it's original, by which we may perceive, that tho' our anceſtors were wiſe in chuſeing the method of education which they eſtabliſhed in their days, as beſt ſuited to the circumſtances of the times, yet we are very unwiſe in perſevering in the ſame ſyſtem without variation, when times and circumſtances are ſo much changed. The true way of imitating the wiſdom of our forefathers is, not to tread exactly in their ſteps, and to do the ſame things in the ſame manner; but to act in ſuch a way as we might with reaſon ſuppoſe they would, did they live in theſe days, and things were ſo ſituated as they are at preſent.

CHAP. IV.

Cauſes of the neglect hitherto of ſtudying the Engliſh language.

THE time of eſtabliſhing a general ſyſtem of education in England was not till the reformation was firſt begun. Previous to that, our

* Whoever has a mind to ſee the power of cuſtom fully diſplayed, and the fatal conſequences reſulting from it, in our preſent method of education, may turn to a beautiful poem on that ſubject, written by Gilbert Weſt, Eſq; and to be found in the 4th vol. of Dodſley's Collection.

ſchools and colleges were chiefly for the uſe of thoſe deſtined to the function of the prieſthood, and what little knowlege and learning were in the kingdom ſeem to have been pretty much monopolized by that order. The laity were in general ſo illiterate, that many even of the nobility and gentry could neither read nor write. The language was then ſo rude and barbarous, that few books were written in it which were either fit for entertainment or uſe; conſequently there could be no inducements to the ſtudy of it. At the ſame time it was ſo ſubject to change, that what was ſpoke in one century could not be underſtood in another. Inſomuch that the hiſtory of perſons and times muſt have come down to us in a very maimed and imperfect manner, had not the records been preſerved in the Latin of the monks; which however mangled and deformed it might be when compared with it's beautiful original, yet had ſtill the advantage over the modern tongues of ſtability; and was of courſe fitter for preſerving and tranſmitting events to poſterity. It muſt be remembered that, not long previous to this period of time, the arts and ſciences had revived in Europe, and the Greek and Roman languages began to be taught in their purity. This was owing to the inundation of Barbarians, and Turks, which had over-run Greece, whoſe diſperſed inhabitants furniſhed all the countries in Europe with maſters. The liberal arts, and the two learned languages, were welcomed in all places as illuſtrious ſtrangers; they were treated at courts

with

with high marks of diſtinction, and the pope, Francis the firſt, Charles the fifth, and Henry the eighth, vied with each other in the encouragement which they gave them. As theſe languages were the repoſitaries of all the knowlege and wiſdom of antiquity, no wonder they were made the chief object of education. It was by the ſtudy of theſe alone, that knowlege could then be acquired. There was as yet few or no tranſlations into our language of the Greek and Roman authors; and indeed it was ſo very defective, that it was not capable of giving any juſt or ſatisfactory idea of them. Beſides this, there were at that time many other motives and inducements to the general ſtudy of thoſe languages, both of neceſſity and uſe, which do not hold now. After the writings of Luther and Calvin had appeared, all Europe was embroiled in religious diſputes, in which we were neceſſarily involved by our ſeceſſion from the church of Rome. None of the modern languages were ſufficiently refined or fixed to become of general uſe. As it was neceſſary to to the ſeveral combatants of the different nations, that ſome one language underſtood by all ſhould be pitched upon, in which they ſhould manage their diſputes, the Latin was choſen by common conſent, and obtained a general currency. On this account that language was then ſpoken and written by all the learned in Europe, with as much fluency and facility as the polite now ſpeak or write French. A knowlege of the Greek was alſo neceſſary, as the new teſtament, which contained

tained the ſubjects of controverſy, and furniſhed them chiefly with materials to ſupport it, was written in that language. As the intereſts and paſſions of princes and of parties mingled themſelves in theſe conteſts, men of the greateſt abilities and moſt diſtinguiſhed talents were of courſe favoured and encouraged by them to be champions in the cauſe which they eſpouſed. The roads to the temples of fame and fortune were not paſſable then, without firſt going thro' Greek and Latin; ſo that all who had either in view muſt neceſſarily paſs thro' thoſe, whatever expence of time or labour it might coſt them. As theſe religious controverſies were the main objects of view in the ſtate at that time, ſo in the mode of education they ſeem to be chiefly conſidered. After the two languages, logic and metaphyſics were the principal ſtudies, to make them able diſputants, to aſſiſt them in unravelling fallacies, or in perplexing and confounding their opponents. The laity being juſt freed from the tyrannical power exerciſed over their minds by the clergy, which was chiefly ſupported by an opinion of ſuperior knowlege and learning in that order, were now reſolved not to be behind-hand with them in thoſe points, and therefore greedily embraced the ſame method of education. Thus it happened that all perſons whatever, deſigned for profeſſions ever ſo different, eccleſiaſtical, civil, or military, the pulpit, ſenate-houſe, bar, phyſick, or army, were all trained exactly in one and the ſame way. To underſtand, ſpeak, and write Latin well, as the lan-

guage

guage by which they could acquire moſt knowlege, and which would be of the greateſt uſe to them in life, was of courſe the univerſal ſtudy; whilſt their own, which on account of it's poverty could only ſerve them in common offices, was little regarded. This general attention to Greek and Latin, as it was founded on reaſon and the neceſſity of the times, ſo was it alſo productive of the beſt conſequences in regard to the Engliſh language; for, without having that particular point in view, all the learned were daily and imperceptibly improveing and enriching their own by words and phraſes borrowed from thoſe two excellent languages, and habitually made that which was before wild and anomalous conform to the regularity and order of thoſe, as much as it's genius and particular conſtruction would admit. What a mighty progreſs was made in this reſpect during the reign of queen Elizabeth may be ſeen by comparing the authors of that time with thoſe who preceded them. That this was entirely owing to their ſkill in the learned languages may be ſhewn by obſerving that there are no traces of the Engliſh having been particularly ſtudied, or made part of education during her reign. Nor was there any ſociety of men either of public or private inſtitution, whoſe office it might be to examine and fix rules to our language. That wiſe princeſs knew that the time was not yet come for ſuch a work. It had not yet arrived at it's maturity; and to attempt before that to fix it to a ſtandard might effectually

effectually ſtop it's growth. She therefore judiciouſly choſe to give all manner of encouragement to the ſtudy of the learned languages, by which it was nouriſhed and ſupported, and daily grew in ſize and ſtrength. Had her ſucceſſors taken as much pains to give ſtability to our language, as ſhe did to bring it to perfection, it might at this day even vie with thoſe of antiquity, and far excel any now ſpoken in the world. For want of this, it is the opinion of one * whoſe authority muſt be of great weight, (as no man hath perhap more cloſely ſtudied the point, none certainly hath wrote more correctly) that our language has ſuffered as many corruptions ſince her time, as it has received improvement. The paſſage being curious and to the point, I ſhall here ſet it down. 'The period wherein the Engliſh tongue received moſt improvement, I take to commence 'with the beginning of queen Elizabeth's reign, 'and to conclude with the great rebellion in forty-'two. It is true, there was a very ill taſte both 'of ſtyle and wit, which prevailed under king 'James the firſt; but that ſeems to have been 'corrected in the firſt years of his ſucceſſor; 'who, among many other qualifications of an 'excellent prince, was a great patron of learning. 'From that great rebellion to this preſent time, I 'am apt to doubt whether the corruptions in our 'language have not, at leaſt, equalled the re-

* Dr. Swift's letter to the lord high treaſurer.

'finements

'finements of it, and theſe corruptions very few 'of the beſt authors in our age have wholly 'eſcaped. During the uſurpation, ſuch an infu- 'ſion of enthuſiaſtick jargon prevailed in every 'writing, as was not ſhaken off in many years 'after. To this ſucceeded that licentiouſneſs 'which entered with the reſtoration; and, from 'infecting our religion and morals, fell to cor- 'rupt our language: which laſt was not like to 'be much improved by thoſe, who at that time 'made up the court of king Charles the ſecond; 'either ſuch who had followed him in his baniſh- 'ment, or who had been altogether converſant 'in the dialect of thoſe fanatic times; or young 'men, who had been educated in the ſame com- 'pany; ſo that the court, which uſed to be the 'ſtandard of propriety and correctneſs of ſpeech, 'was then, and I think hath ever ſince continued, 'the worſt ſchool in England for that accom- 'pliſhment; and ſo will remain, until better care 'be taken in the education of our young nobi- 'lity.'

It may be matter of wonder, that whilſt the other countries in Europe, the French, Italians, Spaniards, &c. &c. in proportion to their progreſs in learning, after having enriched and illuſtrated their ſeveral languages by the aids and lights borrowed from the Greek and Roman, were employed with the utmoſt induſtry to refine, correct, and aſcertain them by fixed and ſtated rules, the Engliſh alone left theirs to the power of chance and

and caprice; inſomuch that it is but within a few months that even a dictionary has been produced here. Whilſt in all the others many excellent grammars and dictionaries have long ſince been publiſhed, the labours of public ſocieties, as well as of private perſons. This is the more aſtoniſhing, when it is conſidered that ſuch a work ſeemed to be of more abſolute neceſſity to us, than to any other nation, and that on many accounts. In the firſt place, after the ſeparation from the church of Rome, our own language alone was uſed in all acts of public worſhip; whereas in the Roman Catholic countries all prayers and religious ceremonies were in Latin. From the nature of our conſtitution we had more conſtant occaſion for the public uſe of it in debates, and conſequently ſtronger inducements to the ſtudy of it. Add to this, that there were three different nations, the Scotch, Iriſh, and Welch, who made up a conſiderable part of the Britiſh dominions, both in power and extent, who ſpoke in tongues different from the Engliſh, and who were far from being firmly united with them in inclinations, and of courſe were purſuing different intereſts. To accompliſh an entire union with theſe people was of the utmoſt importance to them, to which nothing could have more effectually contributed, than the univerſality of one common language. And it is obvious enough that this could not be brought about, unleſs the language were eſtabliſhed upon certain principles, and made capable of being taught by rule. Add to this, that even in England

England itſelf, for want of ſuch a method, there were ſuch various dialects ſpoken, that perſons born and bred in different and diſtant ſhires could ſcarce any more underſtand each others ſpeech, than they could that of a foreigner, which is notorious even now. It may therefore be worth while to enquire how a point of ſuch importance, contrary to the practice of the antient, and example of modern nations, came to be ſo wholly neglected by us even to this day.

As this work was not begun in the reign of Q. Elizabeth, when the language had made the moſt vigorous ſhoots, it was hardly a thing to be wiſhed in the time of her ſucceſſor, as the taint of pedantry had infected every thing which regarded knowlege or diſcourſe. The violent commotions and civil wars, which raged during the greateſt part of the reign of Charles the firſt, rendered all attempts that way impracticable, tho' otherwiſe that would have been the moſt auſpicious æra for ſetting about ſuch a taſk, as the prince was a great encourager of the arts and ſciences. During the uſurpation, ſuch an inundation of cant and jargon had overwhelmed our language, as gave but little proſpect of it's riſing again. On the reſtoration, however, all might have been amended; but from the diſſolute manners and univerſal corruption in the reign of Charles the ſecond, there could be no expectation that any uſeful ſcheme for the public benefit ſhould take place. The ſhort period of his ſucceſſor's government was too full of troubles and commotions, and at the time of the revolution,

revolution, and during king William's reign, the minds of men were too much taken up in eſtabliſhing our noble conſtitution, and their attention too much engaged by the wars waged for the preſervation of the liberties of Europe, to give heed to any other matters, however important in themſelves. The firſt propoſal, that we know of, for an attempt of that kind, was made by Dr. Swift, towards the latter end of queen Anne's reign, in a letter to the lord high treaſurer. And it is generally thought that the ſcheme would certainly have been reduced to practice, had it not been for the ſudden death of that princeſs, ſoon after the publication of that piece. Let others enquire into the cauſes why it has ever ſince lain dormant; it is ſufficient to my purpoſe to ſay, that hitherto no attempt has been made towards the regulation of our language, which like our commons is ſuffered to lie deſolate, uncultivated, and waſte, to the great prejudice, in point of wealth, as well as ornament, of this fair iſland.

CHAP. V.

That thoſe cauſes no longer operate, nor are of any force. The great neceſſity of ſtudying our language ſhewn.

THE motives which induced our anceſtors, upon the firſt eſtabliſhment of a general ſyſtem of education, to lay ſuch a ſtreſs upon the ſtudy of Latin and Greek, and to dedicate ſuch a vaſt

vaſt portion of time to the acquiſition of ſkill in thoſe languages, when at the ſame time their own was totally neglected, are no longer of any force. There is neither the ſame neceſſity to ſpur us now, nor the ſame advantages to induce us to ſuch a cloſe application to thoſe, whether we conſider the general utility reſulting from them to the public, or the private emoluments to individuals. The learned languages are no longer the ſole repoſitaries of knowlege; on the contrary, the Engliſh is become an univerſal magazine not only of antient but of all modern wiſdom. All the great authors of antiquity, as well as of the preſent times, of whatever nation, or in whatever language, may now be read in Engliſh; tho' not perhaps with equal delight, yet with equal advantage in point of knowlege. So that the laity need no longer be afraid of the clergy in that reſpect, even tho' they were entirely to give up to them the ſuperior toil and labour of reading the originals. Add to this, that we have had ſince thoſe days, many excellent writers of our own, upon ſubjects of much more importance to us than any that have been handed down to us in the books of antiquity, and which were untouched by them. Not to mention that even in regard to thoſe works calculated to give delight, and from which they claim their chief pre-eminence, there have not been wanting in this country men of perhaps as great reach of fancy and genius, whoſe writings, if they were as much ſtudied, and whoſe beauties (paradoxical as the opinion may ſeem) if

they

they were as well underſtood, as thoſe of the admired antients, might perhaps afford as much pleaſure, and in no reſpect yield the palm to them. The public conteſts in regard to religion, wherein all the able pens of the ſeveral nations of Europe were engaged, and in which the diſputes were carried on in Latin, have long ſince ceaſed; and it is more than a century ſince we have been embroiled in civil conteſts with various ſects at home, wherein the controverſy has been entirely managed in Engliſh. So that however neceſſary to promotion, and diſtinction ſkill in Latin might formerly have been to a clergyman, of late years knowlege of the Engliſh language would be much more conducive to thoſe points. Beſides, the language itſelf has been ſo much enlarged and improved ſince thoſe days, that it is rendered capable of anſwering every end, whether of profit or pleaſure, to us at leaſt, better than all the others put together, and conſequently is become more worthy to be ſtudied. To ſtate the account in ſhort between our forefathers and us, they ſhewed great wiſdom and good ſenſe in making the learned languages the chief ſtudy in their days, becauſe, however round about the way, knowlege was then to be acquired in none other; and becauſe our own, then poor and uncultivated, could be no other way enriched or refined. Private perſons were in the right to labour at perfection in thoſe, becauſe, beſides the knowlege which they could not otherwiſe have obtained, they were ſure of meeting ſuitable rewards in point of reputation

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and fortune. But the very ſame motives, which urged them ſo powerfully to apply to Latin and Greek, are now more cogent with us to ſtudy chiefly our own language. Becauſe a greater quantity of uſeful knowlege can with more eaſe and leſs time be acquired in that than in any, I had almoſt ſaid all the others: and becauſe the ſoil is now ſo luxurious that it requires more than ordinary cultivation and tillage, in order to produce uſeful and profitable crops, inſtead of being overrun with gawdy flowers, and noxious weeds. And as to individuals, it need ſcarce be mentioned that no ſkill in other languages can contribute in any degree, either to their fame or profit, ſo much as in their own. If theſe points are true, what cauſe can be aſſigned that we ſtill proceed in the old method? Is it a blind veneration paid to the inſtitutions and cuſtoms of old? Upon the ſame principle we might juſt as reaſonably meet our enemies in the ſame ſort of armour as was worn by our countrymen before the invention of guns. But cuſtoms, of which the immediate abſurdity or detriment are at once ſeen and felt, upon change of circumſtances, are eaſily and neceſſarily altered; whereas thoſe, the ill conſequences of which lie more remote, and the bad effects whereof are not ſenſibly perceived 'till a number of years have rolled away, are often ſuffered to remain, 'till time gives them faſt root, and age ſanctifies them. Their duration becomes an argument of their goodneſs, and people, inſtead of weighing their intrinſic merit in the ſcale of reaſon, are apt at

once

once to form a concluſion that they could not have laſted ſo long had they not been right. If it were not for this ſort of prepoſſeſſion, how is it poſſible to account for the abſurd notions of ſo many parents, that Greek and Latin are ſtill the high roads to fortune, becauſe they were ſo two centuries ago, notwithſtanding the many flagrant inſtances to the contrary before their eyes? How many excellent ſcholars, now pining in want, make no other uſe of their Latin but to lament in Virgilian ſtrains, that ever they were acquainted with Virgil, or knew any other but their mother tongue? With what ſorrow do they look back upon their paſt time irretrievably miſpent, tho' not thro' their own fault, and wiſh it had been employed in learning ſome trade, by which they might be ſure of acquiring a comfortable ſubſiſtence? Is not the ingenious and learned tranſlator of Milton's paradiſe loſt, a work which may do the higheſt honour to this country, as it will make that nobleſt of our productions univerſally known thro' Europe, and may become one of the ſtrongeſt inducements to foreigners to ſtudy our language, in order to read ſo excellent a piece in the original; is not this man, I ſay, to the diſgrace of the age, now ſtarving (and probably doomed to do ſo for the reſt of his life) upon a poor curacy in a remote part of the country? And ſhall many fathers expect that their ſons will be able to outdo him in learning, or have nobler opportunities of diſplaying it? But indeed in many caſes this may not be the effect of choice, or prejudice, but of neceſſity. Numbers

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there are who ſee the abſurdity of this conduct, but can find no remedy. They have not the means of giving their ſons ſuch an education as they could wiſh, and therefore are obliged to follow the reigning mode. Nor can it be doubted, that if the means of acquiring ſkill in the Engliſh were as eaſy and common, if it could be taught by as certain rules, and the preceptors were as knowing in that as in the learned languages, infinitely a greater number would apply themſelves to a critical ſtudy of that, both from views of intereſt and inclination, than to the others.

That I may not be miſunderſtood here, I ſhall ſet down part of a paſſage, tho' quoted before, from Mr. Locke, as at once fully expreſſive of, and at the ſame time giving a ſanction to my own ſentiments.

'I am not here ſpeaking againſt Greek and 'Latin; I think they ought to be ſtudied, and the 'Latin, at leaſt, underſtood well by every gen-'tleman. But whatever foreign languages a 'young man meddles with (and the more he 'knows the better) that which he ſhould criti-'cally ſtudy, and labour to get a facility, 'clearneſs, and elegancy to expreſs himſelf in, 'ſhould be his own, and to this purpoſe he ſhould 'daily be exerciſed in it.'

Far be it from me indeed to depreciate the ſtudy of thoſe languages, without which I know it is impoſſible we can ever underſtand our own with accuracy. But the great fault complained of is, that

that this important end ſeems to be entirely forgotten, thro' a ſpirit of pedantry in the teachers; by whom inſtructions in Greek and Latin are given as if they were deſirable only for their own ſakes. Whereas, were their uſes conſtantly pointed out to them towards illuſtrating their own language, young gentlemen would not only go thro' thoſe laborious ſtudies with more immediate delight to themſelves, but would ever after in life endeavour to keep up and improve what ſkill they had acquired in thoſe, as greatly contributeing to ſo uſeful a purpoſe. By a contrary practice, it is well known, that very few, thro' a diſguſt conceived of what appears to them an unprofitable toil, ever arrive at ſufficient perfection in thoſe languages to read the antient authors with eaſe and pleaſure in the original, and therefore, when their neceſſary courſe is over, lay them totally aſide, and in a few years entirely forget what little they had acquired. If they continue to read, it is only in books written in Engliſh, with the principles of which being totally unacquainted, they form their notions of ſtyle upon ſuch authors as happen to pleaſe them moſt. In the choice of which, the matter whereof they treat, not the manner in which it is handled, is chiefly conſidered, * 'Too many of this ſort paſs upon vulgar 'readers for great authors and men of profound 'thought, not on account of any ſuperiority ei-'ther in ſenſe or ſtyle, both which they poſſeſs in

* Biſhop of Cloyne.

a very

'a very moderate degree, nor of any diſcoveries 'they have made in arts and ſciences, which they 'ſeem to be little acquainted with: but purely 'becauſe they flatter the paſſions of corrupt men, 'who are pleaſed to have the clamours of con-'ſcience ſilenced, and thoſe great points of the 'chriſtian religion made ſuſpected, which with-'held them from many views of pleaſure and in-'tereſt, or made them uneaſy in the commiſſion 'of them.' The ſame argument will hold in regard to writings upon any other ſubjects which flatter the paſſions, pleaſe the humours, or fall in with the party-notions of men; and this alone is ſufficient to account for the general bad taſte which is allowed to prevail, as well as the quantity of falſe knowlege, far worſe than none; for that amazing number of wretched pamphlets, written to the times as the phraſe is, which are daily publiſhed, and daily find a ſufficient number of as wretched readers; in ſhort, for thoſe heaps of traſh which are conſtantly expoſed to ſale in the windows of bookſellers, like unripe fruit greedily devoured by green-ſickneſs appetites, and which fill the mind with crudities as pernicious to the underſtanding, as thoſe of the other are to the body. Of the great increaſe of this evil Dr. Swift complained many years ago in a letter to the author of the Tatler. * 'I can 'not but obſerve to you, that until of late years 'a Grub-ſtreet book was always bound in ſheep-

* No. 230.

'skin, with suitable print and paper; the price 'never above a shilling; and taken off wholly by 'common tradesmen, or country pedlars. But 'now they appear in all sizes and shapes, and in 'all places: they are handed about from lapfuls 'in every coffee-house to persons of quality; are 'shewn in Westminster-hall, and the court of 'Requests. You may see them gilt, and in 'royal paper, of five or six hundred pages, and 'rated accordingly. I would engage to furnish 'you with a catalogue of English books, publish-'ed within the compass of seven years past, which 'at the first hand would cost you an hundred 'pounds, wherein you shall not be able to find 'ten lines together of common grammar or com-'mon sense.' It must be allowed, that if English were studied and commonly well understood, and that consequently a general good taste prevailed amongst readers, none of these miserable productions could meet with a sufficient sale, and they would therefore be stifled in their birth. If a correct style should once become a necessary requisite to the success of any book which may be offered to the public, what an army of able-bodied writers must then be obliged to lay down the pen, who, instead of corrupting the hearts and poisoning the understandings of their fellow-subjects, would become useful members of society by carrying muskets against the enemies of their country.

If it be granted that at this day English is the language most universally read by Englishmen; that

that even by thoſe who have made the greateſt progreſs in Latin and Greek, the number of books read in their own is out of all proportion greater than in the learned languages; that the principal view in reading thoſe, or other authors in foreign tongues, is amuſement, whilſt our own are chiefly ſtudied for uſeful purpoſes; it muſt be allowed, that nothing can be a greater national concern than the care of our language. There is ſuch an intimate connection between ideas and words, language and knowlege, that whatever deficiency, or fault, there may be in the one, neceſſarily affects the other. Clearneſs or confuſion of ideas ariſe from obſcurity or preciſion in their marks, and the quantity, as well as certainty, of knowlege depends upon the eaſe and exactneſs with which a language is read and underſtood. If the glaſs be not right, the images reflected by it will not be exact. If the channel be muddy, the ſtream which flows thro' it can not be clear; if there lie heaps of rubbiſh in it, the water can not paſs ſwiftly, or ſmoothly. Should it therefore be the caſe of any country, that an infinite number of books were read there, and very little knowlege obtained; that there ſhould be much ſpeaking, and little underſtanding; that diſputes upon all manner of topics ſhould be carried on both in converſation and writing, without ever coming to an end; it would not follow that the intellectual faculties of ſuch a people were inferior to others, as the whole might eaſily be ſolved by conſidering the ſtate of their language. So far as that is ob-

ſcure or ill underſtood, ſo far muſt the knowlege acquired in it be confuſed or erroneous. This is at once ſeen by any perſon who reads in a foreign language, as he can not pretend to underſtand any author in that, without firſt knowing the preciſe meaning of his words and phraſes; to obtain which, he is obliged to cloſe application and ſtudy, wherein he is aſſiſted by certain and ſtated rules. But it has been before obſerved, that in a mother tongue, where we have no rules to guide us, whoſe uſe and knowlege are obtained from the people we uſually converſe with, or the books we uſually read, we are much more liable to fall into errors than in any other, and conſequently in that have much more occaſion for ſtudy and application. When it is conſidered, that a ſingle term in a propoſition not underſtood exactly in the ſame manner, tho' perhaps very nearly, by two different perſons, may furniſh out matter of diſpute to run thro' many volumes, and to laſt for ages; and when it is conſidered, what little care is taken to come at an accurate knowlege of a language, the moſt copious, and on many other accounts the moſt difficult to be well underſtood of any in the known world, there will be no occaſion to wonder that we ſhould be the moſt unſettled in our notions, and the moſt divided in our opinions of any people, ſince the time of the ſeparation of philoſophy from the ſtudy of rhetoric amongſt the Greeks. It is well known, that the deſtruction of all uſeful knowlege ſoon followed that ſeparation amongſt them, and it is to be feared, that the reſtoration

reſtoration of it amongſt us can be effected no other way than by their reunion.

Seneca attributes the corruptions which had crept into the ſtyle and language of the Romans in his days to a decay of knowlege. May not the converſe propoſition be true in regard to us, that our want of knowlege is chiefly owing to the neglect of ſtudying our language? and the corruptions of our underſtanding to thoſe of our ſtyle? Are not our minds chiefly ſtored with ideas by words, and muſt not clearneſs or obſcurity in the one neceſſarily produce the ſame in the other? The only remedy that could be effectual in this caſe, he ſaid, was to cure the mind *. When that was ſound and ſtrong, the diſcourſe would conſequently be ſo too. But muſt not the mind be cured, and reaſon ſtrengthened by the medium of language? It is from the mind, ſays he, that all our ſentiments and words proceed †. But muſt not the ſentiments come out cloathed in words according to the conception had of them when admitted? However juſt his reaſoning may be in regard to the Romans, yet it will not hold in regard to us, unleſs our language were in an equal ſtate of perfection, and eſtabliſhed upon as ſolid principles, as theirs. There is a great difference between perſons who thro' wantonneſs, or caprice, wander from the way, yet have always

* Oratio nulli moleſta eſt, niſi animus labat, ideo ille curetur. Illo ſano ac valente, oratio quoque robuſta, fortis, virilis eſt.

† Ab illo ſenſus, ab illo verba exeunt.

the right road open to them whenever they recover from their infatuation, and thoſe who may find themſelves in an error, and wiſh to correct it, but have no clue to guide them to what is right.

It may be argued from the great perſpicuity viſible in the reaſonings of ſeveral of our eminent writers, wherein they do not at all yield to the antients, that the Engliſh language is capable of conveying knowlege to the mind, and diſplaying it afterwards, in as clear a manner as that of the Greeks or Romans. But this argument properly traced may perhaps lead to a contrary concluſion. Some of our moſt diſtinguiſhed writers appeared in an age when all knowlege was acquired in the learned languages; ſuch as Bacon, Raleigh, Hooker, and many more. In the more advanced ſtate of the Engliſh, it is apparent to all who read his works, from what ſtores Milton heaped together that immenſe treaſure of ideas. In ſuch of their writings as are in Engliſh, they ſeem to labour and ſtruggle with the language to give birth to their thoughts, in the ſame maturity and perfection with which they were conceived, and are therefore conſtantly obliged to have recourſe to expreſſions borrowed from the Latin: whilſt the Juno Lucina of the antients ſeemed always at hand when their thoughts were delivered in the Roman language. It is well known, that Newton and Locke ſtudied, thought, and writ chiefly in Latin, as moſt capable of that preciſion ſo neceſſary to their ſubjects. Dryden, Addiſon, Berkley,

ley, Swift, and ſuch of our writers as are deemed moſt claſſical, had their minds conſtantly impregnated with ideas from the antient languages. Nor can there perhaps be a ſingle inſtance produced of any man who never read or thought but in Engliſh, that deſerves the name of an author. If Shakeſpear be allowed to be an exception (which yet remains to be proved, as there is good reaſon to believe that he at leaſt underſtood Latin well) there is no forming a rule from a ſingle inſtance of ſo prodigious a birth, nor fixing a ſtandard of meaſurement to others from one mind of ſo gigantic a ſtature.

The difficulty of writing with clearneſs and accuracy in our language can appear from nothing more ſtrongly than this, that it ſeems generally allowed by thoſe of the greateſt diſcernment, and who have moſt conſidered the point, that, out of the infinite number who have publiſhed their works, we have but very few who have written pure and correct Engliſh. And they who were well acquainted with Dr. Swift muſt have often heard him ſay, that the exactneſs of his ſtyle was the chief ſtudy and labour of his life. How muſt ſuch difficulty and conſtant attention check the progreſs of thoſe poſſeſſed of the moſt elevated genius, and what noble productions may they not have been the occaſion of loſing to the world?

* The artiſt would make but a ſlow progreſs, were

* The leſs reſtraint a poet's imagination ſuffers from the mechanical part of his work, the more his fancy is capable

he obliged himſelf to provide and prepare all his materials; but when they are ready to his hand, he can diſpatch a great deal in a little time, and with eaſe. Nor is to be doubted, that if they had been early trained and inſtructed in their own language, ſo as to acquire an habit of writing it with correctneſs and facility, when they firſt thought of publiſhing, but that even our moſt eminent authors would have left behind them works far ſuperior both in quantity and quality to what they are at preſent. So that we may ſafely ſay with Dr. Swift, in his letter to the lord high treaſurer, 'That nothing would be of 'greater uſe towards the improvement of know-'lege and politeneſs, than ſome effectual method 'for correcting, enlarging, and aſcertaining our 'language.'

There is no one will heſitate to allow, that nothing could be more deſirable, nothing could more effectually contribute to the benefit and glory of this country, than if it were poſſible to bring the Engliſh language to as great a degree of perfection, ſtability, and general uſe, as thoſe of Greece and Rome. In order to ſee whether this be practicable or not, I ſhall hereafter conſider it with relation to the Roman language only, as well to avoid fruitleſs repetitions (ſince all arguments concluſive with reſpect to the one will be equally ſo in regard to the other) as becauſe we have a

capable of taking it's flight. The leſs it is confined, the more liberty it has for invention.

Du Bois, Crit. Ref. vol. i. c. 35.

more

more diſtinct knowlege of the riſe and progreſs of the Roman, than of the Greek, as well as the means by which it was brought to it's maturity. Firſt then, as to it's perfection: I ſhall endeavour to ſhew that the means to arrive at it are equally in our power, that our inducements are ſtronger, and that we might in all probability compaſs the end in a ſhorter ſpace of time, and with leſs labour than they did. Secondly, as to ſtability: That if our language were once brought to a ſtandard, we have more powerful and certain means to fix and preſerve it in it's ſtate of perfection than they had. Thirdly, as to general uſe: That we have it more in our power than they had to propagate our language, and make it univerſal.

CHAP. VI.

That the means to arrive at perfection in our language are equally in our power, that our inducements to it are ſtronger, and that we might in all probability compaſs our end in a ſhorter ſpace of time, and with leſs labour, than the Romans did.

IT has been already ſhewn, that the means by which the Roman language was improved, and arrived at it's ſtate of perfection, were the ſtudy and practice of rhetoric and oratory. An attention to thoſe neceſſarily induced an attention to language. The power of words, whether in re-

gard to ſenſe or ſound, became a point of eſſential conſideration to thoſe who were to ſpeak in public. To aſſiſt them in their progreſs, the Romans had the benefit of the precepts and example of the Greeks. But in this reſpect we have rather the advantage, ſince we have theirs alſo added to thoſe of Greece. It may be preſumed that from the writings of Ariſtotle, Plutarch, Longinus, Cicero, and Quintilian, a better treatiſe of rhetoric might be compiled now, than any which was in uſe amongſt the Romans, at leaſt previous to the time that their language had arrived at perfection. It is true, that the Greek rhetoricians did not a little contribute to the progreſs of their pupils, by joining example to precept, in an art which above all others requires to be learned immediately from the mouth of a maſter. But if the ſame encouragement were now given, it is not to be doubted but that many maſters would ſoon ariſe, equally well qualified with them both as inſtructors, and models for imitation.

That the inducements to the ſtudy of oratory, and conſequently of language, are more powerful with us than with the Romans, may be eaſily ſeen, by conſidering that there is not a ſingle point in which it was uſeful or neceſſary to them, wherein it is not equally ſo to us. But there is one article, wherein it's utility is beyond all degrees of compariſon greater and more extenſive than in all the reſt, which is peculiar to us, I mean the article of religion.

That

That we might in all probability bring our language to a ſtate of perfection in a much ſhorter ſpace of time, and with leſs labour and difficulty, than the Romans did theirs, may be judged by a comparative view of the ſtate of theirs, at the period when the introduction of the ſtudy of eloquence firſt engaged them in that taſk, with ours as it ſtands at preſent. It muſt be obſerved, that at that juncture the Roman language was far from having arrived at a ſtate of maturity; it was weak and poor, and was gradually ſtrengthened and enriched by what it borrowed by little and little from the Grecian ſtores. Whereas ours has long ſince arrived at it's full ſize, and is copious even to exuberance. They were obliged to wait the ſlow growth of the tree; but ours has long ſince borne fruit, and is likely to become barren only thro' the luxuriance of the branches. It is apparent enough how much leſs time it requires to prune away what is ſuperfluous, than to wait the gradual increaſe of what is uſeful. Beſides, they had then no books written in Latin that could be of any great aſſiſtance to them. If the judgement of Horace is to be relied on, even the beſt authors of thoſe times wrote in a very coarſe inelegant ſtyle. On which account ſcarce any of them have been handed down to us, except ſome of the works of Plautus. And we know in what eſtimation * his writings, as well as thoſe of his

* At noſtri proavi Plautinos & numeros &
Laudavere ſales, nimium patienter utrumque,
Ne dicam ſtulte, mirati. HORAT.

cotemporaries,

cotemporaries, were held in the Auguſtan age. Ennius, Pacuvius, &c. are known to us only by name. Whereas we have in our language at preſent ſeveral works which may at once ſerve as rules to guide us in our enquiries, and ſtandards to fix our knowlege when attained. The learned and ingenious author of our Engliſh dictionary has delivered it as his opinion, that * 'From the 'authors which roſe in the time of Elizabeth, a 'ſpeech might be formed adequate to all the pur-'poſes of uſe and elegance. If the language of 'theology were extracted from Hooker and the 'tranſlation of the Bible; the terms of natural 'knowlege from Bacon; the phraſes of policy, 'war, and navigation, from Raleigh; the dialect 'of poetry and fiction from Spencer and Sidney; 'and the diction of common life from Shake-'ſpear; few ideas would be loſt to mankind, for 'want of Engliſh words, in which they might 'be expreſſed.' To this we may add, that as models of ſtyle, Milton in the poetic, and Shakeſpear in the dramatic, Swift, Addiſon, Dryden, and Sir William Temple (in ſome of his works) in proſe, may be conſidered as truly claſſical, as the Virgil, Cæſar, Tully, and Salluſt of the Romans; nor is there any reaſon that they ſhould not be handed down as ſuch equally to the end of time, unleſs, by abandoning our language entirely to the fantaſtical caprices of novelty, it ſhould come to be ſo changed and metamorphoſed, as that

* Preface to Johnſon's dictionary.

they

they ſhall be as little underſtood, and read with as little pleaſure, two or three centuries hence, as the preceding authors of that date are now by us. At which time perhaps ſome ſcribbler of the day may be employed to modernize them; by paſſing thro' whoſe filtring ſtone, they may indeed be made more clear, but muſt entirely loſe their ſpirit. And who knows but that if a total ignorance of the force and harmony of numbers ſhould be ſuffered to continue, and the vile Gothic taſte for rhime ſhould increaſe, but that ſome future verſifier ſhall be rewarded, and obtain univerſal praiſe, for chiming the divine numbers of Paradiſe loſt, and fitting them to the vitiated ears of the age. Nor will this ſeem an improbable conjecture, when we conſider with what pleaſure, at this day, the fiery Pegaſus of Homer is beheld in trammels, ambling along in a ſhuffling pace, to the jingle of his ſilver bells.

CHAP. VII.

That if our language were once brought to a ſtandard, we have more powerful and certain means to fix and preſerve it in it's ſtate of perfection than they had.

THE ſtability of language may be conſidered in regard to two points, pronunciation and meaning. To the firſt it is neceſſary that the ſame words ſhould always be ſounded in the ſame manner; that they ſhould always be underſtood

in

in the ſame ſenſe. The uſe of ſpeech is chiefly inſtrumental to the former, of books to the latter. The more univerſally therefore a language is well and uniformly ſpoken by any people, the more likely it is to acquire permanence as to pronunciation: the greater number of correct authors there are in it, who agree in the uſe of words, and the more generally they are read, the greater proſpect is there of giving it ſtability as to meaning. To conſider theſe two points ſeparately. Firſt, as to ſound. To make a language univerſally and uniformly well ſpoken by any people, it is neceſſary that the pronunciation ſhould be formed upon known invariable rules, and that the cuſtomary ſpeech ſhould be conformable to thoſe rules. For as the bulk of the people can not be ſuppoſed to be acquainted with thoſe, cuſtom muſt in that caſe, as well as in moſt others, ſupply in them the want of knowlege. Both theſe points were admirably provided for amongſt the Romans. They did not leave the ſound of their language to chance or caprice, it was eſtabliſhed upon rational and certain rules, to which all their public ſpeakers conformed. This uniformity of pronounciation in their orators neceſſarily diffuſed a general good taſte thro' their hearers, which ſupplied the place of rules, and at the ſame time furniſhed them with a ſure criterion, by which they might diſcover any impropriety in the ſound of words. For being accuſtomed to hear their words always ſounded in the ſame manner, they would be immediately ſenſible of the leaſt alteration, and the being

being new was a ſufficient mark to them of the pronunciation's being vitious. It is impoſſible to conceive a more immoveable ſtandard to language, conſidered in regard to ſound only, or a ſtronger bulwark againſt innovations, than this was. For when the laws of pronunciation were once eſtabliſhed by the orators, upon certain and rational principles, it was no longer in their power to break thro' them: on the contrary, they were obliged to a more ſtrict and exact obſervation of the rules than any others, and from thenceforth were compelled to follow cuſtom, not choice *. For what public ſpeaker in his ſenſes would venture thro' an affectation of novelty, to expoſe himſelf to the cenſure or ridicule of the meaneſt of his hearers? Thus the body of the people became the guardians of their language, as well as their liberties, and it is obſervable that they both fell together. Nor is this at all wonderful, or without it's foundation in reaſon. For tho' the multitude have not underſtanding to form political ſyſtems, or fix rules to languages, nay tho' they are incapable of knowing or comprehending their fitneſs after they are eſtabliſhed, yet they will be always found their true and natural ſupports, and it is by them alone that either the one or the other can be preſerved, or deſtroyed. However ingenuity and deſign may be the

* In dicendo autem vitium vel maximum eſt a vulgari genere orationis atque a conſuetudine communis ſenſus abhorrere. Cic. de Orat. l. i.

property

property of the few, labour and execution depend upon the many. Reaſon and law may be the province of one, but ſtrength and cuſtom belong to the other.

It was to the frequent opportunities they had of hearing their public ſpeakers, that the Romans were indebted for their general exactneſs of pronunciation; from which alſo reſulted it's fixed ſtate. Now if we compare our opportunities with theirs, it will at once appear, that in this reſpect the advantage lies greatly on our ſide. For beſides thoſe of the ſenate-houſe, bar, &c. which we have in common with them, our churches furniſh one of more frequent, regular, and general uſe, than all the others. Theſe are daily open to all ranks and orders, and it is part of the duty of every perſon in the nation to attend divine ſervice at leaſt one day in the week. If therefore the pronunciation of our language were fixed by certain rules, and were uniformly and invariably obſerved by all the clergy, if they had alſo an equal power with the orators of old of captivating attention, and charming the ear, is it to be doubted but that a general good taſte, and exactneſs of ſpeech, would be diffuſed thro' the whole people, proportionably ſuperior to the Romans, as our advantages and opportunities would be greater and more frequent? This muſt be allowed, unleſs the people of this country are inferior to them both in ſenſitive and intellectual faculties; a point which will hardly be granted.

Now

Now to conſider language with reſpect to it's meaning. It will not require much pains to prove, that we have it in our power to eſtabliſh that as certainly, and more univerſally than the Romans had. Here it is to be obſerved, the intellectual faculty is chiefly concerned, whereas pronunciation is obtained only thro' the ſenſe of hearing. By the invention of writing the meaning of words can be conveyed to the mind as perfectly by the eye, as thro' the ear. And that method, which gives the greateſt room and moſt time for the underſtanding to exert itſelf, will bid the faireſt for procuring the greateſt accuracy in the knowlege of words. There can be no doubt therefore that this is to be acquired more perfectly, and with more certainty, by ſtudy, and books, than by converſation, and public harangues; for this plain reaſon, that in the one caſe a man commands his own time, and can appropriate as much of it as he thinks proper, to weigh the force of every word; in the other, his underſtanding is obliged to keep pace with the ſpeaker. In this reſpect, the invention of printing has given us an amazing advantage over the antients. As their books were all tranſcribed, the number of copies could not be ſo eaſily multiplied, nor conſequently fall into ſo many hands. And the expence of purchaſing thoſe written copies was ſo great, that moſt perſons, except thoſe of fortune, were in a manner precluded from the uſe of them. Accordingly we find that the people in general were wholly illiterate. Whereas amongſt

us,

us, by means of the preſs, and the cheapneſs of books, there are hardly any ſo low who may not acquire knowlege by the eye, as well as by the ear. Hence it is manifeſt that ſkill in our own language might eaſily become more univerſal now, than it could in their days. And that it might in a much ſhorter ſpace of time, with more eaſe, and equal certainty, be reduced to rules, and fixed to a ſtandard, has been already ſhewn.

It is true that the two great articles, the pulpit and the preſs, which give us ſuch a vaſt ſuperiority over the antients, may produce effects directly oppoſite to what we have been ſpeaking of. The pulpit, which, as it is the moſt general, ought to be the moſt fixed ſtandard of pronunciation, may be made the chief ſource of diverſity and corruption in point of ſound. And the preſs, which might be the grand conduit of knowlege and clearneſs, may become the main channel of obſcurity and confuſion as to meaning. If the clergy, being entirely deſtitute of rule, ſhould each of them find himſelf obliged to make uſe of that mode of pronunciation which he has accidentally acquired, or which he prefers from fancy or caprice, we may hear Engliſh ſpoken in the churches in as many various dialects as there are ſhires in this iſland; and there may be as many ſingularities in particular words as there are individuals of that order. Nor can their example fail to have a ſtrong influence upon the generality of their hearers. If the preſs ſhould prove to be an eaſy paſſport to authors who do not underſtand the

the language they write in, but who from an art of flattering the paſſions, and humouring the vitious and depraved taſte of the age, obtain great vogue and are generally read, it will follow that the mind of the reader will neceſſarily be contaminated by any taints in the ſtyle of the admired writer; and that obſcurity and want of preciſion in the words of the one will produce confuſion and irregularity in the ideas of the other.

Indeed thoſe two great inſtruments, as they are in a perpetual ſtate of activity, muſt be continually doing good or harm to the ſtate of knowlege. As the power extends itſelf over the whole realm, inſomuch that there is not an individual who is not in ſome meaſure influenced by it, the good or harm muſt be univerſal. If their movements were regulated by juſt and fixed rules, directed to proper ends, their operations would be uniform, and the beſt effects would follow. If they are left to the guidance of blind chance, nothing but confuſion and diſorder can enſue.

The Romans have afforded us a glaring example of this truth. For many ages was their language in a ſtate of diſorder and perpetual change like ours: but when once they applied themſelves to the ſtudy of it, and reduced it to rule, it was brought by means of it's regularity into that fixed ſtate in which we now ſee it, and by means of which it was that we do now ſee it. If we do not apply to the ſame method, there can be nothing more evident than that ours muſt go on perpetually fluctuating, and there is the higheſt

degree

degree of probability to ſuppoſe, that the changes made in it will be continually for the worſe. There would be no great difficulty in proving, that the ſtructure of our language is at this day in a worſe condition in regard to ſound, than it was even in the time of Chaucer. And all who have wrote upon the point are agreed, that in every other reſpect it has been declining ſince the reign of Charles the firſt. Amongſt many others, the teſtimony of Mr. Johnſon muſt be of allowed authority on this occaſion. * 'So far have I been 'from any care to grace my pages with modern 'decorations, that I have ſtudiouſly endeavoured 'to collect examples and authorities from the 'writers before the reſtoration, whoſe works I 'regard as the wells of Engliſh undefiled, as the 'pure ſources of genuine diction. Our language, 'for almoſt a century, has, by the concurrence 'of many cauſes, been gradually departing from 'it's original Teutonic character, and deviating 'towards a Gallic ſtructure and phraſeology, from 'which it ought to be our endeavour to recall it, 'by making our antient volumes the ground-'work of ſtyle, admitting among the addition of 'later times, only ſuch as may ſupply real defi-'ciencies, ſuch as are readily adopted by the ge-'nius of our tongue, and incorporate eaſily with 'our native idioms.'

* Pref. to Johnſ. dict.

We

We have already taken a view of the riſe and progreſs of the Roman language towards it's perfection; let us now conſider the cauſes of it's decline and corruption. From this enquiry we ſhall evidently perceive, that the operation of the ſame cauſes, jointly with others more powerful of our own, muſt neceſſarily make our language grow worſe and worſe, and in no very long ſpace of time reduce it to an irretrievable ſtate of corruption, unleſs ſome meaſures are ſpeedily taken to eſtabliſh it on a fixed and ſolid foundation. And at the ſame time it will appear, that if it were once fixed, the means of preſerving it in that ſtate are much more certain and powerful, with us, than with them, and that it might laſt, with little or no variation, at leaſt as long as our conſtitution.

Seneca attributes the corruption of language in his days to luxury, depravity of morals, affectation of ſingularity in the writers, prevalence of their example, and love of novelty *. He has repreſented

* Si diſciplina civitatis laboravit, & ſe in delicias dedit, argumentum eſt luxuriæ publicæ orationis laſcivia——Non poteſt alius eſſe ingenio, alius animo color.

Quomodo conviviorum luxuria, quomodo veſtium, ægræ civitatis indicia ſunt; ſic orationis licentia, ſi modo frequens eſt, oſtendit animos quoque, a quibus verba exeunt, procidiſſe.

Cum aſſuevit animus faſtidire quæ ex more ſunt, & illi pro ſordidis ſolita ſunt, etiam in oratione quod novum eſt quærit.

Hæc

preſented the abuſe in ſuch ſtrong terms, and inveighed againſt the innovations introduced at that time with ſuch force, that one would imagine he himſelf had entirely kept clear of them. And yet no one was a more remarkable inſtance of the contagious power of example, and the irreſiſtible force of faſhion, than this very man, as no one contributed more to alter and corrupt the Roman ſtyle than he himſelf. Rollin hath ſhewn the ſudden and general influence of example in the following manner. 'One ſingle perſon of reputation ſometimes, as Seneca obſerves, and he himſelf is an inſtance of it, who by his eminent qualifications ſhall have acquired the eſteem of the public, may ſuffice to introduce this bad taſte and corrupt ſtyle. Whilſt, moved by a ſecret ambition, a man of this character ſtrives to diſtinguiſh himſelf from the reſt of the orators and writers of his age, and to open a new path, where he thinks it better to march alone at the head of his new diſciples, than follow at the heels of the old maſters; whilſt he prefers the reputation of wit to that of ſolidity, purſues what is bright, rather than what is ſound, and ſets the marvellous before the natural and true; whilſt he chuſes rather to apply to the fancy than the judgment, to dazzle reaſon than convince it, to ſurprize the hearer into an approba-

Hæc vitia unus aliquis inducit, ſub quo tunc eloquentia eſt, ceteri imitantur, & alteri tradunt. Senec. ep. 114, 115.

'tion

'tion rather than deſerve it, and by a kind of de-
'luſion, and ſoft enchantment, carry off the ad-
'miration and applauſes of ſuperficial minds,
'(and ſuch the multitude always are) other wri-
'ters ſeduced by the charms of novelty, and the
'hopes of a like ſucceſs, will ſuffer themſelves
'inſenſibly to be hurried down the ſtream, and
'add ſtrength to it by following it. And thus
'the old taſte, tho' better in itſelf, ſhall give way
'to the new one without redreſs, which ſhall
'preſently aſſume the force of a law, and draw a
'whole nation after it *.'

But if luxury, ſingularity, novelty, and example, had power to change the whole conſtitution of the Roman language, tho' fixed and eſtabliſhed on ſuch ſolid foundations, and by ſuch certain rules, what havock muſt they not make with ours which is deſtitute of both; left like a ſhip without either anchor, or rudder, to be toſt about perpetually the ſport of every gale from faſhion or caprice? And how much more ſpeedily and univerſally muſt all alterations and corruptions, whether in ſound or ſenſe, be propagated by means of the pulpit and the preſs, whoſe power, as it were, inſtantaneouſly pervade the whole land?

It may be ſaid, that if a language ſo eſtabliſhed, fixed by ſo perfect a ſtandard, replete with ſuch excellent models, could not be preſerved from

* How very oppoſite is the above paragraph to the writings of lord Shaftſbury?

change

change and decay, to what purpoſe is it to take pains with ours, which in time muſt inevitably meet the ſame fate? But will any one aſk this who has read Virgil, Horace, Cicero, Livy, and the other great authors of Rome? Tho' the prodigal and ſpendthrift ſucceſſors of theſe great men riotouſly and wantonly ſquandered away their language as well as the many other treaſures bequeathed to them by their frugal anceſtors, yet they could only do it during their own lives; and whatever debts they themſelves might have contracted to folly, their poſterity could not be deprived of their eſtate in knowlege, ſo indiſſolubly entailed by the ſettlement of language. And ſhall we not endeavour to ſecure to future generations, entire and unchanged, their birthright in Shakeſpear, in Milton, in Addiſon, and Swift? Or ſhall we put it in the power of one giddy and profuſe age to diſſipate, or render of no value, the heaps of treaſure now collected in the many excellent books written by Engliſh authors?

If the natural mutability of things were a ſufficient argument to deter us from endeavouring to fix them, the ſame would hold good in regard to every thing elſe as well as to language, and we might ſit down for ever in a ſtate of inaction. Mr. Johnſon has juſtly obſerved on this ſubject, † 'If 'the changes that we fear be thus irreſiſtible, 'what remains but to acquieſce with ſilence, as in 'the other inſurmountable diſtreſſes of humanity? 'It remains that we retard what we can not repel, 'that

† Pref. to his Dict.

'that we palliate what we can not cure. Life 'may be lengthened by care, tho' death can not 'be ultimately defeated: tongues, like governments, have a natural tendency to degeneration; 'we have long preſerved our conſtitution, let us 'make ſome ſtruggles for our language.'

But ſurely tho' the conſideration of the changeable and periſhable nature of all other mortal works might juſtly occaſion deſpondence, yet ſuch deſpondence would not be well founded with reſpect to language, ſince that is the only ſublunary thing from which men may expect perpetuity to their labours. Of this we have undeniable inſtances in the Greek and Roman authors; and ſurely a deſire of giving the ſame immortality to our own would not be irrational, and the attempt, however ineffectual, would be ſtill laudable. Is it not to be wiſhed, that in caſe any great revolution ſhould hereafter wholly deſtroy our language in the ſame manner theirs were, ſo as that it ſhould be no longer ſpoken upon earth, that the fair memorials of the many great men produced in this country, the noble model of our conſtitution, and the true ſpirit of liberty, far ſuperior to the antients, which breathes in our writers, ſhould be preſerved for ever like theirs, in our books, in the maſterly drawing and lively colours of the originals? May not this be the means of perpetuating the Britiſh conſtitution either here or in ſome other country to the end of time? Had not the noble authors of antiquity come down to us, we ſhould hardly have been able to frame ſo perfect

an idea of liberty, or enjoyed the invaluable bleſſings it beſtows. And ſhould it be in the fate of things, that the long-laboured fabric of our conſtitution, the work of ages, ſhould in time moulder away, and tumble to the ground, or be deſtroyed by violence, who knows in what regions of the earth the noble edifice may again and again be raiſed, ſhould the beautiful model be preſerved entire in the works of our writers? But to leave theſe ſpeculative points, and come to what is more uſeful.

If it could be made appear probable, that were our language once fixed upon juſt and certain rules, it would in all likelihood continue in the ſame ſtate, at leaſt as long as our conſtitution remained, ſure no one would think any pains too great to accompliſh ſo deſirable a point. Let it be remembered, that the Roman ſpeech and ſtyle continued invariably pure from the date of their perfection, 'till there was an alteration in their government; and that the changes and corruptions introduced into their language and writings were not 'till ſome time after the people had loſt their liberties. This will in a great meaſure ſerve to confirm the hypotheſis above laid down, that the ſtability of their language was chiefly, if not entirely, owing to the general good taſte acquired by the people from conſtantly hearing their orators. For, upon the change of the republic into a monarchy, oratory was baniſhed, or only the ſhadow of it remained. The people, no longer accuſtomed to hear their ſpeech correctly ſpoken *in public*, loſt their diſtinguiſhing faculty, their ſole

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was not ſo great as of that which was ſpoken. But the caſe is different with us. The preſs hath opened as wide an avenue to knowlege thro' the eye, as thro' the ear, and people now may be as univerſally benefited by reading, as by diſcourſe. Thus our ſtyle in writing, having the ſame common broad bottom for it's baſis with our ſpeech, might be more ſecure of ſtanding than that of the antients. But as the pyramid, which of all buildings is the moſt firm and durable, if reverſed, is the moſt liable to fall, ſo the very inſtrument which might contribute moſt to the refinement and eſtabliſhment of our language, if wrongly applied, may be the ſure means of it's corruption and change. As the preſs is in conſtant action, it muſt conſtantly diffuſe either a good or bad taſte thro' the people. If they have no rules to guide them, their judgments, governed by chance or fancy, will conſequently be erroneous; and however evidently ſo they may be, in time they muſt be eſtabliſhed, and by cuſtom

(Quem penes arbitrium & jus & norma loquendi)

obtain the force of a law. Venal and needy writers, whoſe view is profit, will of courſe conform to the reigning taſte, as the moſt likely way to obtain ſale for their works; and they who are actuated by nobler motives will be allured by the charms of preſent fame. Even the judicious few, finding their endeavours vain to ſtem it, will ſuffer themſelves to be carried away by the torrent. This is the great ſource of the corruptions in our language;

language; * 'And theſe corruptions very few of 'the beſt authors in our age have wholly eſcaped.' If Seneca with all his diſcernment, his knowlege, and fine taſte, could not reſiſt the force of faſhion, but fell himſelf into the very faults againſt which he ſo violently declaimed, and that in a language ſo regulated, ſo fixed, what are we to expect from our writers in one as yet unſettled, unaſcertained? The Romans had one tolerable ſecurity for the preſervation of their ſtyle, from the high price of their books, ſo that no works were likely to meet with many purchaſers, but ſuch as were of reputation. Or if any innovations were begun in thoſe in the time of the republic, they were not of courſe adopted into their ſpeech, ſince the people in general, who were the guardians of that, knew little or nothing of the writings, and would not eaſily bear any new modes in their orators. But with us a wide communication is opened between the two channels, the ſtreams are blended, and whatever taint there is in the one of courſe infects the other. We ſee daily that new phraſes and words are adopted from writings into diſcourſe, and from diſcourſe into writings. Since therefore the people in general muſt be ultimately the regulators of our language, at leaſt in it's moſt eſſential points, it mainly imports us that they ſhould be properly qualified for ſo important an office. If they muſt all be taught to read, it were to be wiſhed they were alſo taught to underſtand.

* Swift.

Whilſt they are committed to the care of the moſt ignorant maſters, and receive the firſt rudiments of language in the very worſt books that can be found, is it to be hoped that they ſhould acquire more knowlege than their teachers, or have a notion of ſtyle different from the models which have been preſented to them? If they were well inſtructed, and were made acquainted with none but good patterns, there can be no doubt but as general a good taſte would prevail amongſt them in regard to written language, as did amongſt the Romans with reſpect to that which was ſpoken. The conſequence of which general good taſte would be, that no books which were not written in a good ſtyle would now find any ſale, as no orator could then make his way who did not ſpeak with propriety. And if this were the caſe, it is incredible what a number of fountains from whence flow ignorance and folly, vice and impiety, would at once be dried up, and diſappear. But this can never be 'till the preceptors have a ſyſtem of well-digeſted rules, to guide themſelves as well as their pupils in the courſe of their inſtructions. 'Till that happens the propagation of reading is but the propagation of error, and the preſs muſt continue to be the ſource of ignorance and falſe taſte.

I ſhall cloſe this chapter with obſerving that we have one great advantage over the antients, which is, that ſo long at leaſt as our religion continues unaltered, we have one ſure barrier againſt a total change

change of our language. This is ſet forth by Dr. Swift in his letter to lord Oxford, where he ſays, "It is your lordſhip's obſervation, that if it were "not for the bible and common-prayer-book in "the vulgar tongue, we ſhould hardly be able to "underſtand any thing that was written among "us an hundred years ago; which is certainly "true: for thoſe books, being perpetually read in "churches, have proved a kind of ſtandard for "language, eſpecially to the common people." And this might be made a more certain, general, and durable criterion of words, than any the Romans had, not only in point of ſound and pronunciation, but alſo of ſenſe and meaning.

CHAP. VIII.

That we have it more in our power to propagate our language in other countries, and make it univerſal, than they had.

AS the chief glory of a people ariſes from their authors, the propagation of their language is neceſſary to the diſplaying of that glory in it's full luſtre, which otherwiſe would be unknown in other regions, or dimly ſeen as thro' a cloud. Of the propagation of a language there are chiefly three cauſes, conqueſt, commerce, and the number of uſeful or entertaining books which are written in it. Of theſe, the firſt has hitherto proved ineffectual. The victor may change the laws and cuſtoms of a country, but he will find it

it difficult, if not impoſſible, to make a total change in their language. The uſe of their native ſpeech is the laſt thing which the vanquiſhed would willingly part with, and, next to their thoughts, is what the conqueror has the leaſt power over. The attempt would prove impracticable with regard to a preſent race, the chief of whom are too old to learn a new tongue; and indeed all endeavours to eſtabliſh it in a riſing generation have naturally ended in a ſort of compromiſe; a mixture of the two, from which reſulted a new one. From this ſource may be derived almoſt all the various languages now ſpoken in Europe. Commerce in itſelf is but a very inadequate cauſe of ſpreading language, both as a very ſmall knowlege of it will ſuffice for the carrying on buſineſs, and as in this caſe it would be confined only to the mercantile part of other countries. Beſides, this too is apt to give riſe to a new jargon, compoſed out of the reſpective tongues of the nations which trade with each other. But a conſtant commerce naturally excites curioſity to be acquainted with the hiſtory, cuſtoms, and manners, of the people with whom it is carried on, which can not be obtained in a ſatisfactory manner without underſtanding their language. In this reſpect Great Britain has not only an infinite advantage over Rome, but, in proportion to the extent of her trade, over all countries in the world. For if by common conſent of all nations a language were to be pitched upon which ſhould be of univerſal uſe in point of traffic, the ſuffrages of courſe would fall, *cæteris paribus*,

paribus, upon that ſpoken by the people who carried on the largeſt and moſt extenſive trade with the reſt of the world. That the Engliſh therefore is hardly known abroad, and the French ſo univerſally, can not be attributed to that cauſe, unleſs they are allowed to exceed us in that point. To the propagation of a language, it is neceſſary that they who are inclined to it may learn it with eaſe and certainty; but this it is impoſſible to do without the uſe of rules. The French have very wiſely with great pains and labour regulated and fixed their tongue; ſo that foreigners of all countries may without much difficulty acquire even an accurate ſkill in it both as to ſound and ſenſe. Whereas a total neglect on the part of the Engliſh, in thoſe reſpects, has rendered it impoſſible to ſtrangers either to pronounce or underſtand it with any degree of propriety or certainty. Nor is this to be wondered at, conſidering how few even of the natives have any great knowlege of either. And the difficulty of learning it abroad may be judged from the very ſmall progreſs made in it by foreigners who reſide for years amongſt us; many of whom paſs great part of their lives, and take immenſe pains, without attaining even a tolerable idea of it. If the queſtion be aſked, why the Engliſh above all other European languages is ſo hard to be attained, the anſwer is ready, that it is the only one not yet reduced to rule. And this is the true reaſon that, notwithſtanding our univerſal commerce, it is ſo little known abroad, except to a few of the curious;

and it is from a contrary proceeding that the French has obtained a general currency. It may be worth the conſideration of politicians, whether this may not in time give them a ſuperiority in trade, as it may be a ſtrong inducement to moſt people, where other reſpects are equal, to give the preference to thoſe whoſe ſpeech they underſtand, and with whom they can converſe with eaſe.

But the great cauſe of ſpreading a language, and which makes it moſt ſought after, is the number of uſeful or delightful books which are written in it. Of theſe the latter too has the preference. For writings merely of uſe, when well tranſlated, loſe nothing of their intrinſic value: but poems, and elegant compoſitions in proſe, which are chiefly calculated to give pleaſure, muſt loſe the greateſt part of their beauty in another language, as that conſiſts chiefly in the harmony reſulting from the arrangement of words, and a peculiar grace and force of phraſeology. Tranſlations, to works of this ſort are like prints to pictures, they can only ſhew the deſign, but the maſterly ſtrokes and expreſſion are but faintly imitated, and the colouring entirely loſt. But if the ſpreading of books in the originals in other countries, and the number of their readers, were to be the teſt of the excellence of their writers, France would certainly bear away the palm, not only from Great Britain, but from Athens and Rome. For one reader which Sophocles, Euripides, Terence, and Horace have found in any

country

country in Europe, their Corneille, Racine, Moliere, and Boileau, have met with twenty. Whilſt the Engliſh authors of the greateſt eminence are known in moſt even by name but to a few; and their works like rare manuſcripts are only to be found in the libraries of the curious. Is it becauſe that their writers and language are really ſuperior to ours? The contrary may be aſſerted without fearing any imputation of prejudice. No, it is becauſe they are read, and underſtood with eaſe. Where pleaſure is the end, the means to come at it muſt not be too laborious. The delight in reading the beſt authors muſt be diminiſhed in proportion to the difficulty of underſtanding them. The French have made an highway thro' their part of Parnaſſus, in which the eaſe wherewith the traveller jogs along gives him an higher reliſh for the beauties around him, and many places, like objects on a road, become remarkable, only by their being there, which otherwiſe might never be heard of. Whereas we, who muſt be allowed to poſſeſs the more lovely part of the hill, whether conſidered in regard to it's natural or improved beauties, by ſuffering the way to be almoſt impaſſable, have rendered it unfrequented. To what other cauſe can it be aſſigned (not to enter into any compariſon of the dead, which would be wandering into too wide a field) that the name of Voltaire is ſo familiar to all the mouths of Europe, whilſt thoſe of Akenſide or Maſon are ſcarce ever heard but from Engliſh tongues?

It will perhaps be allowed, that if the Engliſh language were as well and as univerſally known in Europe, as the French, it would ſoon obtain the preference. And in that caſe it muſt alſo be allowed, that it would obtain a more general uſe than ever the Roman did even in it's moſt flouriſhing ſtate, as this has been already effected by the French. That this advantage which the moderns have over the antients is chiefly owing to the invention of printing, is a point too obvious to be inſiſted on.

CHAP. IX.

Whether our language be capable of a ſufficient degree of perfection to make the ſtudy of it general, and to afford as good a proſpect of it's duration as the Latin.

IT may be ſaid, that if agreeableneſs of ſound, and the charm of numbers, be ſo uſeful to the propagation, and ſo neceſſary to the permanence of a language, ours being far inferior in it's own nature to the Roman in thoſe reſpects, and not equal to ſome of the modern, muſt have a much leſs chance of being ſought after by the preſent times, or of being handed down to future ages: that if the utmoſt pains were taken to poliſh it, it would only be like cutting a pebble after the faſhion of a diamond, which may make a ſhew indeed, and have ſome luſtre, but, being of no intrinſic value, will not bear a price, nor intereſt people much in it's preſervation. This opinion ſeems to have

have been too haſtily adopted by moſt writers upon this ſubject. Upon a fair enquiry it might perhaps appear, that they have judged too ſuperficially, and miſtaken a bad habit of body, occaſioned by humours, the effect of indolence and intemperance, for original defects in the conſtitution. If the ſtamina be ſtrong, and the vitals untouched, all diſorders may be removed by proper remedies. But to examine the conſtitution of our language would be to enter upon a topic too extenſive for the nature of this work. I ſhall therefore only throw together ſome thoughts upon our poetic ſtyle, conſidered with relation to that of the Roman and of the modern tongues. In which I ſhall endeavour to ſhew, that upon the whole we are not inferior to the antients, and have an undoubted ſuperiority over all the moderns, from the very genius and conſtitution of our language.

In the poetic ſtyle two things are to be conſidered, expreſſion and harmony. The firſt regards the choice and arrangement of words conſidered as ſigns of our ideas: the laſt, their election and diſpoſition with reſpect to their ſound only, without reference to their meaning. To expreſſion, copiouſneſs and energy are neceſſary; in the firſt of which our language is perhaps ſuperior to all others, in the laſt may yield to none. And the only complaint in regard to either is what Mr. Johnſon has juſtly made, the want of regulation. He ſays in the preface to his dictionary, 'When I 'took the firſt ſurvey of my undertaking, I found

'our

' our ſpeech copious without order, and energetic
' without rules: whereever I turned my view,
' there was perplexity to be diſentangled, and
' confuſion to be regulated.' In point of harmony indeed, it ſeems to be taken for granted, that our language is far inferior to the antients, and not equal to ſome of the modern tongues. But upon examination it will appear that this opinion is founded upon the corruption of language by our writers, rather than any original defect in itſelf. At firſt view the Roman ſeems to have a vaſt ſuperiority over ours in it's very conſtruction, from which reſults a natural fitneſs in it's words to form harmonious combinations, as well as in the regulations eſtabliſhed to give that natural fitneſs it's full force. The firſt great advantage which it has over ours ariſes from it's original conſtruction; wherein the different caſes, genders, and numbers of their nouns, as well as moods and tenſes of their verbs, are all expreſſed by changes of termination in their words. From this two good conſequences followed; one, that their language was freed from that multitude of monoſyllables with which ours is neceſſarily crowded, in order to mark thoſe variations; the other, that the final ſyllables, which leave the ſtrongeſt impreſſion on the ear, being no longer left to chance, were ſettled by eſtabliſhed rules, ſo as to form the greateſt diverſity, as well as agreeableneſs of ſound. The ſecond great advantage aroſe from the unlimited privilege given to their writers to tranſpoſe their words at pleaſure, and to range them in whatever

whatever order they thought proper ſo as to form the moſt agreeable cadence. But if it ſhould appear in regard to the firſt, that the original formation of their language only fitted it for the particular meaſures and numbers which they uſed, and that ours is equally well adapted to thoſe which we uſe; if it ſhould appear alſo that our meaſure and numbers have upon the whole a ſuperiority over theirs; will not this ſeeming advantage at once vaniſh? As to the ſecond, tho' the reſtraint laid upon our writers by the neceſſity of following the natural order of words may make it more difficult for them to form an harmonious combination, yet when that is obtained, there can be no doubt but that the intuitive clearneſs with which the underſtanding perceives the meaning of the words, by means of that natural order, muſt leave it more diſengaged to attend to the numbers, and conſequently give them an additional luſtre.

That what I have advanced in relation to numbers may appear in a clear light, it will not be amiſs to take a comparative view of the Latin heroic meaſure, as that is the chief, with the Engliſh. It might eaſily be proved from the ſpecific differences of the two languages, that they require different meaſures, and that the hexameter of the Latins is beſt ſuited to the genius of their tongue, as blank verſe is to ours. But this at preſent would take up too much time unneceſſarily. It is ſufficient to my purpoſe that ſuch has been the practice of the beſt writers in both; and

whoever

whoever has the leaſt doubt whether this practice has it's foundation in reaſon, may ſoon be convinced that the Latin hexameter is not ſuited to our tongue, by looking over the attempts made in that way by Sidney and others; whoſe verſes of that ſort ſeem to move with a ridiculous and burleſque air, inſtead of that ſtate and majeſty which we admire in the Roman poets. He would alſo be immediately ſenſible how ill adapted Latin words are to Engliſh blank verſe, ſhould he endeavour to fit them to that meaſure. The Latin heroic line conſiſts of ſix feet, the Engliſh but of five. This at firſt view gives the former the pre-eminence over the latter in point of ſize, and when we come to examine their movements, in point of ſtateline ſ alſo. Nor can there be any doubt that if the mere ſtructure of the verſes were alone to be conſidered, without reference to their uſe, but that the former would have evident advantages over the latter. But when they come to be examined with relation to their fitneſs to go thro' a long work, the latter will have a manifeſt ſuperiority. To prove this it need only be ſhewn, that the Latin heroic admits but of two movements, the dactyl and ſpondee: whereas the Engliſh admits of ſeven, the ſpondee, the trochee, the iambus, pyrrichius, dactyl, anapœſt, and tribrachus. Hence we may ſee what an infinite advantage the latter has over the former in point of variety, and conſequently of expreſſion and harmony, which are the primary, as mere ſound and melody are only the ſecondary qualities of numbers

numbers. So that granting their language to be compoſed of words more ſonorous and agreeable to the ear, yet as their verſe can have but two movements, it is impoſſible to vary thoſe in ſuch a manner, but in works of any length a great ſameneſs of cadence muſt be perceived, for which no richneſs of ſound can compenſate. Now if what is here ſaid of the Engliſh meaſure be true, it is apparent from the uſe of ſeven movements, that a ſkilful poet may in the longeſt performance throw an almoſt infinite variety of numbers into his verſes, and conſequently never cloy the ear. If the Romans had but two bells, and we have ſeven, tho' theirs might be compoſed of a finer metal, and their tone be much ſuperior, yet whoever liſtened for any length of time would find himſelf much more delighted by the various changes rung upon the one, than by the mere pleaſure of ſound in the other.

I know it will at once be ſaid, that my reaſonings upon this head muſt of courſe fall to the ground, as they are built upon a falſe hypotheſis. And yet, however univerſally the contrary notion may have prevailed, there is not any thing more demonſtrably true than what I have advanced, in regard to the movements of which an Engliſh heroic verſe may be compoſed. But as common received opinions, grown inveterate by time, are not eaſily to be rooted out, it will require a particular treatiſe to ſet this whole matter right, and to lay open the theory of Engliſh numbers, which at preſent ſeem to be inveloped with a general darkneſs

darkneſs. Leſt the reader ſhould too haſtily pronounce upon what I have already advanced, I would have him aſk himſelf this queſtion, 'Am 'I acquainted with the principles of Engliſh 'poetic meaſure, or do I know what it is which 'conſtitutes an heroic verſe?' If he finds himſelf at a loſs, he can not be certain but that what I have ſet down may be true. If he goes by the common rule, that is indubitably falſe. It is generally received that an Engliſh heroic line conſiſts of ten ſyllables, whereas nothing is more certain than that many, and thoſe very harmonious, are compoſed of eleven, twelve, thirteen, nay even fourteen ſyllables. But the conſideration of theſe matters would carry me too far out of the way. It will however be immediately to my purpoſe to trace the ſource of the erroneous opinions ſo generally ſpread in regard to this point, as it will at the ſame time lay open one of the chief cauſes of the corruption of our language.

Nothing has contributed ſo much to deſtroy all true taſte for poetry as the eſtabliſhment of rhime. A fooliſh admiration of this trifling and artificial ornament has turned people's thoughts from the contemplation of the real and natural beauty of numbers. Like the Iſraelites, we have gone whoring after our own fancies, and worſhipped this idol with ſo infatuated a zeal, that our language has in a great meaſure fallen a ſacrifice to it. Hear what a candid † Frenchman has ingenu-

† Du Bos, Crit. Ref. vol. i. c. 36.

ouſly

ouſly ſaid upon this ſubject, notwithſtanding that their tongue is incapable of any tolerable poetic meaſure without rhime. 'There is no rule in 'poetry, whoſe obſervance coſts ſo much trouble, 'and produces ſo few beauties in verſe, as that of 'rhiming. Rhime frequently maims, and almoſt 'always enervates the ſenſe of a diſcourſe. For 'one bright thought which the paſſion of rhiming 'throws in our way by chance, it is certainly 'every day the cauſe of a hundred others, which 'people would bluſh to make uſe of, were it not 'for the richneſs or novelty of the rhime, with 'which theſe thoughts are attended.

'Some perhaps will ſay, that there muſt cer-'tainly be a much greater beauty in rhime than I 'pretend to allow. The conſent of all nations '(they will add) is a ſenſible proof in favour of 'rhime; the uſe of which is at preſent univerſally 'adopted.

'My anſwer is, in the firſt place, that I do not 'conteſt the agreeableneſs of rhime; I only look 'upon this agreeableneſs in a much inferior light 'to that which ariſes from the numbers and har-'mony of verſe, and which ſhews itſelf continu-'ally during the metrical pronunciation. Num-'bers and harmony are a light which throws out 'a conſtant luſtre, but rhime is a mere flaſh, which 'diſappears after having given only a ſhort-lived 'ſplendor. In fact, the richeſt rhime has but a 'tranſient effect. Were we even to rate the va-'lue of verſes only by the difficulties that are to be 'ſurmounted in the making them, it is leſs diffi-

'cult,

'cult, without compariſon, to rhime completely, 'than to compoſe numerous and harmonious 'verſes. In aiming at the latter, we meet with 'obſtacles at every word. Nothing extricates a 'French poet out of theſe difficulties but his ge-'nius, his ear, and perſeverance; for he has no 'aſſiſtance to expect from any method hitherto re-'duced to art. Theſe obſtructions do not occur 'ſo frequently, when a perſon propoſes only to 'rhime well; and beſides, in endeavouring to 'ſurmount them, he meets with the aſſiſtance of 'a dictionary of rhimes, that favourite book of 'all ſevere rhimers. For let theſe gentlemen 'ſay what they will, there are none of them but 'what have this excellent work in their ſtudies.

'Secondly, I grant that we rhime all our verſes, 'and that our neighbours do likewiſe moſt part of 'theirs. We find the uſe of rhime eſtabliſhed 'even in Aſia and America. But the greateſt 'part of theſe people are barbarians; and the 'rhiming nations, that have been ſince civilized, 'were barbarous and illiterate when their poetry 'was firſt formed. The languages they ſpoke 'were not ſuſceptible of a greater perfection of 'verſe, when they laid as it were the firſt foun-'dations of their poetry. True it is, that the 'European nations here ſpoken of became in 'proceſs of time a polite and learned people. But 'as they poliſhed themſelves not 'till a long time 'after they had been formed into a body politic, 'and as their national cuſtoms were already ſet-'tled, and even ſtrengthened by the length of

'time

'time they had been ſtanding, when theſe nations received the improvements ariſing from a judicious culture of the Greek and Latin tongues; thoſe cuſtoms have only been poliſhed and mended, but could never be entirely altered. An architect, who has undertaken to repair an old Gothic building, may make ſome alterations to render it more commodious, but he can not alter the defects which ariſe from the firſt conſtruction. He can not ſhape it into a regular building without pulling down the old one, in order to erect a new edifice upon a different plan.

'Rhime, as well as fiefs and duels, owes it's origin to the barbarouſneſs of our anceſtors. The people from whom the modern nations are deſcended, and who ſubverted the Roman empire, had already their poets, tho' barbarians, when they firſt ſettled in Gaul and other provinces of the empire. As the languages, in which theſe ignorant poets wrote, were not ſufficiently improved to bear handling according to the rules of metre, nor even admitted of attempting it, they fancied there would be ſome ornament in terminating with the ſame ſound, two conſecutive or relative parts of a diſcourſe, both of which were to be of an equal extent. This identity of final ſounds, repeated at the end of a certain number of ſyllables, formed a kind of grace, and ſeemed to expreſs, or did, if you pleaſe, expreſs, ſomething of a cadence

'in

'in verſe. Thus it was, in all probability, that 'rhime firſt roſe and eſtabliſhed itſelf in Europe.'

Here we have a full picture of rhime preſented us, together with the hiſtory of it's riſe and progreſs; the legitimate offspring of barbariſm and neceſſity, nurſed by ignorance. However untoward it's proſpects might be from the circumſtances of it's birth and nurture, yet in time it has arrived at ſuch a degree of ſtrength and power, as to invade the poſſeſſions of harmony and numbers in the regions of poetry, the genuine children of knowlege and politeneſs, which it has entirely ſubdued, and reduced them to a ſtate of ſlavery, and a blind obedience to it's abſolute authority. The barbariſm of it's origin can not be doubted, ſince it has ever been found amongſt the moſt rude and ſavage nations, but was not even known to the more poliſhed and refined. Nor can we be to ſeek from what ſtock it comes, when we ſee that it is ſo congenial with all the tongues derived from the Gothic root, that in thoſe it is conſidered as a chief ornament, and gives the moſt general delight; whereas in the nobler Greek and Latin, far from adding any beauty to them, it becomes ridiculous, and occaſions diſguſt †. So that any nation, which is proud of it's poetry on that ſcore, only boaſts of it's barbarity, and is ſo far on a footing with thoſe ſavages who wear rings and other gewgaws

† This will be at once perceived by looking over the poems in Leonine verſe, which in the times of monkiſh learning were ſo much in vogue.

in

in their noſes, and bobbing at their lips, by way of ornament. And ſhould any people be happily poſſeſſed of a language equally capable of all the charms and powers of numbers with thoſe of the antients, yet give the preference to rhime, wherein would they differ from the wild Indians, who barter their diamonds and precious ſtones for bits of glaſs and tinkling bawbles?

Rhime has not only been a falſe and unneceſſary ornament to the Engliſh poetry, but it has likewiſe almoſt deſtroyed it's true beauty, and in a great meaſure unharmonized our language. Like ſome kinds of red paint, which applied to the face give it an artificial glow, but whoſe poiſonous quality by conſtant uſe devours the natural bloom, ſhrivels up the ſkin, and impairs the conſtitution. So that a cuſtom begun thro' accidental paleneſs from a weakly habit of body, or indulged thro' wantonneſs, may in time come to be not a matter of choice, but of neceſſity.

When our language was in it's firſt ſtate of rudeneſs and imperfection, like moſt others derived from the ſame Gothic original, it abounded ſo in monoſyllables, and words artleſsly compoſed of the moſt diſſonant and diſcordant letters, that all attempts in our poets towards introducing numbers and harmony into their meaſure muſt have proved fruitleſs and vain. To ſupply their place they were therefore obliged to have recourſe to rhime. But when it was enriched and refined, by means of the cultivation of the learned languages, with vaſt ſtores of well-formed and well-ſounding

words,

words, compoſed of different, and proper numbers of ſyllables, it would have been eaſy then to have eſtabliſhed new and harmonious meaſures, ſuited to the genius of the newly improved tongue. But, on the contrary, the only uſe made of theſe acquiſitions was to increaſe the empire of rhime. Foreign words were not admitted as denizens, but treated as priſoners; and, without regard to their noble deſcent, were clothed in ſlaviſh dreſſes, and chained to the oar. The mercileſs poets, with a cruelty like that of Procruſtes, dragged all ſuch as were of tall and comely ſtature to the bed of rhime, and lopped them to that ſize. Nor did ſuch of the natives as happened to reſemble them in thoſe reſpects eſcape one bit better. Whatever diſorders there might have been in our language before, this was the firſt blow which was given to it's conſtitution, and the firſt diſeaſe which ſeized upon the vitals. Moſt words of two ſyllables were reduced to one, of three to two, and ſo upwards. This too was done by a general law, with ſo little regard to ſound, that the vowels were of courſe baniſhed, and the harſheſt conſonants often huddled together. Nor can there be any cauſe aſſigned for this, but in order to increaſe the poet's number of rhimes. For as the final ſyllables of our heroic lines in rhime muſt be long, or accented, no word ending in a ſhort or unaccented ſyllable could poſſibly be made uſe of in that reſpect. Againſt this the poets found a ſure remedy, by throwing out the vowels of every ſuch ſhort ſyllable, and crowding the conſonants into the

the preceding one. This practice is humorouſly deſcribed by Dr. Swift in one of the Tatlers: 'Thus we cram one ſyllable, and cut off the reſt; 'as the owl fattened her mice after ſhe had bit off 'their legs, to prevent them from running away; 'and if ours be the ſame reaſon for maiming of 'words, it will certainly anſwer the end, for I 'am ſure no other nation will deſire to borrow 'them.'

An example or two will ſet this matter in a clear light, and at the ſame time ſhew the ill effects of ſuch practice. The third perſon of the preſent tenſe of the Engliſh verb, to *move*, was formerly written *moveth*, of *prove*, *proveth*; but as theſe could not be uſed as rhimes, they were reduced to one ſyllable, and the termination altered to *moves*, *proves*; and this rule was made general in regard to all verbs. In the increaſe of the verbs, to *drudge*, to *grudge*, it was formerly wrote and pronounced *drudg-ed*, *grudg-ed*, as two ſyllables, but for the ſame reaſon they were reduced to one, *drudg'd*, *grudg'd*. In the laſt of theſe examples we may ſee that there are five conſonants to one vowel. And this cuſtom, as Dr. Swift has very juſtly obſerved, of joining the moſt obdurate conſonants, without one intervening vowel, has formed ſuch harſh and jarring ſounds as none but a northern ear could endure. In the former, by changing the old termination of *-eth*, as, *proveth*, into *-s*, as *proves*, the uſe of that letter has been greatly multiplied. This is more

immediately obvious in all ſuch verbs as originally contain one more *s*'s as *deſigns* for *deſigneth*, *biſſes* for *biſſeth*, *diſpoſſeſſes* for *diſpoſſeſſeth*. By being made alſo the termination of moſt nouns ſubſtantive in the plural, inſtead of *en*, with which many of them formerly ended *, and continuing to be the general ſign of the gentive caſe, our language has been much hurt as to ſound, by the perpetual repetition of a diſagreeable letter, with which it before too much abounded, as the letter *c* before the vowels *e* and *i* had exactly the ſame power, and pronunciation †. And tho' cuſtom have made all this ſo familiar to our ears, as to let it paſs unnoticed by us, yet it is immediately perceived by all foreigners, who have generally agreed in giveing it the name of the hiſſing language.

Nor are theſe the only ill conſequences of the uſe of rhime; pronunciation has been alſo rendered more uncertain by it, for tho' at firſt view it might rather ſeem to be a guide to that, as it certainly would were it always uſed with ſcrupulous exactneſs, yet by the latitude which poets have allowed themſelves, in order to render the taſk of rhime more eaſy, it ſerves rather to perplex, than aſſiſt people, in their enquiries after true pronunciation. For theſe gentlemen have not been contented to admit into the number of good rhimes all ſuch words whoſe final ſyllables ſtrike the ear with a ſimilarity of ſound, but all ſuch as appear to the eye conſtructed in the ſame manner, tho' their ſounds be very dif-

* *As* houſen for houſes. † e. g. ceaſe, civil.

ferent

ferent when repeated. For inſtance; the words *loves*, *proves*, and *groves*, appear exactly ſimilar to the eye; the vowels and two laſt conſonants in all being the very ſame, they look as if their ſounds too ſhould be alſo exactly alike, and would certainly be read ſo by one who was not acquainted with the idiom of our tongue. And yet theſe three words, which are allowed to be good rhimes, have very different ſounds to the ear; tho' cuſtom has rendered this familiar to us, yet the abſurdity of the practice will be immediately viſible by writing down the words as they are pronounced, *luvs*, *prooves*, and *groves*, by which we may perceive, that it is only in the laſt word the letter *o* has it's own ſound, in the firſt it has the power of a *u*, and in the ſecond of a double *o*, and conſequently that theſe words can no more rhime to each other than thoſe that are compoſed of different vowels. Nor can there be conceived a more ridiculous rule than that which makes the eye an arbiter of ſound. But the poets were in the right, in order to leſſen their own labour, to obtain as great a latitude as poſſible for their favourite rhime; and as they were in undoubted poſſeſſion of all words of ſimilar ſounds in ſpeech, tho' ſpelt differently on paper, they thought they might with equal propriety lay claim to all words that were ſpelt on paper as if they ſounded alike, tho' they appeared very different when ſpoken. As this practice is univerſal even amongſt our beſt rhimers, there is no occaſion to ſay how much it may puzzle and miſlead thoſe, who would

aſſiſt themſelves in acquiring a knowlege of our tongue by reading the poets: not to mention the many deviations from the right ſound which may be pointed out in the beſt of them, on account of the temptation of an apt word. In which ſome have indulged themſelves ſo looſely, as to give different pronunciations to the ſame words in different places, according as it beſt ſerved the preſent turn. The ſame cauſe has alſo affected our language not a little in regard to the ſenſe and meaning of words. This will be obvious enough to any one who hath ſtudied our rhimers, and ſeen with how little ceremony they have made uſe of words which furniſhed them with a lucky rhime, tho' at the expence of preciſion. And this may perhaps be one of the chief ſources of the very vague ſignifications of our words.

Thus has rhime proved the greateſt enemy to our language in all it's eſſential as well as ornamental qualities, and in proportion as the power and influence of that increaſed, thoſe of ſound, harmony, numbers, expreſſion, energy, clearneſs, and preciſion, have been diminiſhed. And tho' the general opinion be, that the refinement of our language may be dated from the time that the refinement commenced in rhime, in the days of Dryden, &c. yet this may eaſily be ſhewn to be originally an error in judgement founded on falſe appearances, ſince ſtrengthened by time and cuſtom; and that our language, inſtead of a progreſſive motion towards perfection, which it has been judged to have had by incautious ſpectators,

has

has really been deſcribing a circular one, and conſtantly, tho' imperceptibly, bending towards the point of it's original barbarity from which it ſet out.

That our language, in point of ſound, has been continually relapſing into it's firſt ſtate of barbariſm, ever ſince the innovations made in it by means of the prevailing ſpirit of rhiming, may be ſeen by comparing it's preſent with it's original condition in that reſpect. The great defects of our tongue, in it's rude primary ſtate, were, that it was chiefly compoſed of monoſyllables, and thoſe made up of ill choſen conſonants, linked together by as few vowels as poſſible. This fault it had in common with all other tongues, previous to their ſtate of cultivation and refinement, but more particularly thoſe ſpoken by the northern nations, the roughneſs of whoſe natures and manners ſeem to have communicated an harſhneſs to their ſpeech. When by conqueſt, commerce, the introduction of literature and of the arts and ſciences, our language became firſt enriched with numbers of words borrowed from other tongues, or elſe new coined, it was only rendered more copious, and fit for uſe, but received little or no benefit in point of ſound or harmony. For the new and adopted words were obliged to conform to the genius of the natives, and upon their admiſſion were ſtripped of their ornamental vowels, and many of their better ſounding conſonants were changed for thoſe of a rougher kind, which were more in uſe, and fa-

miliar to the ear. They were all reduced to one or to as few ſyllables as poſſible, by cutting off their initial vowels or their terminations. Thus out of *expendo* was made *ſpend*, *extraneus ſtrange*, *debitum debt*, *dubito doubt*, *clericus clerk*, and *ſpiritus ſpright*. In the plural of this laſt word, *ſprights*, it is worth obſerving that there are ſeven conſonants crammed into a ſyllable with only one vowel, and that from a word of three ſyllables with three vowels. Our firſt poets found it impoſſible to produce any thing harmonious out of ſuch diſcordant materials, and were therefore obliged to content themſelves with the ſingle and poor ornament of rhime. Thoſe who ſucceeded them endeavoured all they could to remedy the defects in our language, and make it capable of numbers, by adding length to words, and increaſing the number of vowels. This was begun by ſir John Gower, and afterwards carried to a great height by his diſciple Chaucer. Tho' the language had not as yet arrived at ſufficient perfection, to admit of diſcarding rhime entirely, and relying wholly upon numbers, yet by keeping rhime in it's proper ſubordinate ſtate it was daily tending towards it. For in the days of Chaucer rhime was conſidered in it's true light, as the loweſt part of poetry. Neither ſound nor meaning were ever ſacrificed to it: whenever their intereſts became incompatible, rhime was always obliged to give way; it was thought a leſs evil to have an indifferent or bad rhime, than to maim or perplex the ſenſe or pronunciation. No words

were

were contracted, no vowels thrown out of ſyllables in order to make room for that; on the contrary, they fixed initial, and added final vowels as often as poſſible. The terminating *e* was always ſounded. The verbs in general were lengthened, by the addition of *eth* and *ed* in their variations, and many of the nouns as well as verbs by *en* in the third perſon, as *aſſuagen* for *aſſuages*. But all theſe ſteps towards rendering our language completely fit for numbers and meaſure were defeated by ſome who afterwards aroſe, and who have very improperly been called the refiners of our tongue, when in fact they have been the chief corrupters of it. A few who were poſſeſſed of a happy facility in rhiming, by that pleaſing knack, ſo levelled to the capacities of all people, debauched the taſte of the nation, and of courſe gave rhime the firſt place in poetry. This uſurper, like all others, exerciſed it's power in a tyrannical manner, and the whole language was made ſubſervient to it's will. Then it was that our vowels were again diſcarded according to the old barbarous rule, and the conſonants huddled together. Then it was that the initial and terminating ſyllables were lopped, and monoſyllables once again multiplied. The final *e* became mute, *eth* was changed into the hiſſing *s*, and *ed* was *ſtripped* of it's vowel; with numberleſs other corruptions, which it would be needleſs to repeat. And all this with no other view in the world, but to increaſe the number of rhimes. Had they made uſe of this as a poetical licence only in the act of rhiming, the conſtitution of our lan-

guage could not have been impaired by it. But the poets knew too well, that if words were written or pronounced differently at the end of lines from what they were in other places, rhime would have but a precarious tenure, and would ſoon be diſlodged. They therefore abbreviated their words in the ſame manner in all parts of the verſe, and, not contented with this, they introduced the ſame cuſtoms into proſe too. Thus the evil has irretrievably been ſpread thro' the whole ſubſtance as well as form of our language. Whoever will take the trouble only to caſt his eye over a few pages of Chaucer, and compare them with thoſe of any modern poet, will ſoon diſcover, by the number of apoſtrophes in the latter, that the proportion of vowels to conſonants was infinitely greater in his days than at preſent, and that conſequently the words of our language were better conſtituted at that time to give pleaſure to the ear in point of ſound.

All theſe corruptions of our language will, upon the leaſt reflection, evidently appear to have been owing to the neglect of the ſtudy of oratory. For had the art of ſpeaking been made a neceſſary branch of education, (which it certainly ſhould have been for many important reaſons at the time of the reformation) our language would very ſoon, like the Roman, have been fixed upon ſtated invariable rules. The care of it in regard to ſound and pronunciation would then have belonged to their natural guardians, the public ſpeakers, who were more intereſted in the proper ſupport of

thoſe, as they addreſſed their words only to the ear; nor would they have ſuffered this province to have been uſurped by the poets, whoſe works are chiefly ſubmitted to the eye. The poets muſt in that caſe have taken their ſtandard of ſound and pronunciation from the orators, who certainly had the beſt right to fix it; whereas, by means of this neglect, our ſpeakers have been obliged to follow the poets in all their capricious changes of pronunciation, and in the Gothic ſounds again reſtored by them, thro' the vile amputation of ſyllables, and baniſhment of vowels, in order to bring down our words to their baſe ſtandard. Had the art of reading and ſpeaking well been ſtudied by all who applied themſelves to literature, people in general would have had ſome rational principles and ſtated rules to guide them in thoſe points, and would therefore never have ſuffered ſuch abſurd and pernicious innovations to have taken place. But as they had neither precept nor example, they were of courſe without either judgment or taſte; and conſequently were admirably fitted to follow with a blind zeal ſuch writers as were moſt pleaſing to them, or moſt faſhionable. This prevailing ignorance and want of taſte obliged the poets alſo to adapt their meaſure to the capacities of their readers. For there can be no doubt, had knowlege and a good taſte been more general, but that all who were poſſeſſed of real genius would have applied themſelves to the cultivation of numbers and meaſure only, and left rhime to the pretenders, and thoſe of low capaci-

ties. But to what purpoſe was it to be at great pains and coſt to collect pearls in order to throw them before ſwine? Numbers, cadence, and harmony in meaſure, can no more be perceived by perſons who can not read with propriety and grace, than the charms of a muſical compoſition can be known from a view of the notes by one who is not acquainted with their powers. There are few ears indeed ſo dull that can not perceive rhime; and this it was which made it of ſuch general uſe amongſt all who wiſhed to have many readers, all who wrote either with a view to profit or preſent reputation. Let me endeavour to ſet this whole matter in a clear light. Every one who is acquainted with Latin poetry muſt be convinced, that it is impoſſible to know any thing of the cadence of their verſes without a knowlege of proſody. For as their various ſorts of metre were compoſed of different kinds of feet, formed out of different combinations of long and ſhort ſyllables, from which reſulted the rhythmus, or cadence, it was impoſſible to perceive the one without knowing the other. But the quantity being once determined, and the particular movements or feet known out of which the verſe was compoſed, whether heroic, ſaphic, alcaic, &c. the cadence became immediately perceptible even to the dulleſt ear, on account of the ſimplicity of their meaſures, which hardly ever admitted more than two movements, or feet, in any particular kind. For inſtance, the heroic meaſure admitted only of the dactyl and ſpondee. Thus as the abbè Du Bos has juſtly

juſtly remarked, 'The obſerving of the rules 'of Latin poetry is a neceſſary cauſe of numbers 'in verſes compoſed according to the rules of this 'poetry. The ſucceſſion of ſhort and long ſyllables, 'variouſly mixed purſuant to the proportion pre-'ſcribed by art, produces always in Latin ſuch a 'cadence as the kind of verſe requires *.' Now, if we compare our heroic meaſure with theirs in this reſpect, it will evidently appear that it is much more difficult to perceive the cadence, or rhythmus, of the Engliſh, than of the Latin verſe. For if what I have before advanced be true, which can certainly be proved, that the Engliſh heroic meaſure will admit of ſeven movements, inſtead of their two; of all the various kinds of feet which were uſed in all their different ſorts of meaſure, it will neceſſarily follow, that it will require rather a more accurate knowlege of proſody, and more application and practice, to read or repeat Engliſh verſes with propriety and grace, than the Latin. This will be ſufficiently illuſtrated by conſidering how eaſy it is to beat time to any ſimple uniform movement that is generally known, ſuch as that of a minuet, in compariſon of the more complicated and varied concertos. And, to carry on the alluſion, it will require no great ſkill or pains to learn to play or ſing tunes whoſe equal and ſimilar parts form an eaſy modulation, but to play or ſing at ſight thoſe whoſe harmony is the reſult of diverſity and inequality in their members, will de-

* Vol. i, ch. 35.

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mand a complete knowlege of the art, as well as much practice. When therefore we reflect, that notwithſtanding the great eaſe and certainty with which the art of reading and repeating their poems might be acquired, the Romans took uncommon pains to arrive at the utmoſt accuracy in that reſpect; that to the knowlege of the rules conſtant practice was added; that they had perſons regularly trained to be able to perform it with exactneſs and grace, as much as our ſingers now are in muſic; and that the reciting fine paſſages out of Virgil and their other excellent poets was a chief part of their extertainment, in the ſame manner as the ſinging ſelect airs of Handel, or playing favourite ſolos of Geminiani, are with us; we need no longer wonder that ſkill and good taſte in point of numbers ſo generally prevailed amongſt them. And for reaſons quite contrary we can not be at a loſs to know the cauſe of the total ignorance, and univerſal bad taſte, in that reſpect, amongſt us. We neither know any thing of proſody, nor have any rules as yet ſettled in regard to it. The quantity of our ſyllables is ſtill vague and undetermined. There are no perſons trained to the art of reading well, nor have we ever an opportunity of hearing any of our poems ſkilfully and gracefully recited. All this will appear the more extraordinary, when it is conſidered how much more neceſſary ſuch attention and pains are to us, than they were to them. For, as it has been before obſerved, a knowlege of quantity alone, which

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muſt have been habitually acquired in a country where the ſpeech was ſo regulated, and exactly ſpoken, and indeed, as Cicero has informed us, was poſſeſſed by the meaneſt of the people, was ſufficient to make them perceive the cadence of their ſeveral meaſures, and to repeat them with propriety, tho' not with grace. But there are more ingredients go to the compoſition of Engliſh numbers, which as often depend upon the ſenſe and meaning of the words, as upon the ſound and quantity of their ſyllables. Accent and emphaſis are not here always confined to their diſtinct provinces, inaſmuch as accent often determines the ſenſe, and emphaſis the ſound of words. Quantity with us is not always aſcertained by the mere value of ſyllables conſidered as ſimple ſounds, ſince it is in the power of emphaſis to alter their quality, and to change a ſyllable, ſhort in it's own nature, into a long one. So that no one can pretend to read harmoniouſly, who can not alſo read ſenſibly. This was otherwiſe amongſt the Romans; for the quantity of ſyllables being immutably fixed, a certain proportion of the long and ſhort, ranged according to ſtated rules, were a neceſſary cauſe of numbers in their verſes, whether they were read ſenſibly or not. It is true, that this hath greatly increaſed the difficulty of reading our poetical compoſitions with harmony and propriety, nor can it indeed, on that account, be well done, without firſt ſtudying them; yet the extraordinary labour would be well rewarded, by the additional

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expreſſion, energy, and variety, which this very circumſtance has given to our numbers.

When therefore it is conſidered, that in order to perceive the harmony, as well as force, of Engliſh numbers, a perſon muſt not only know how to give the proper accent to each word, and the exact degree of length and ſhortneſs to each ſyllable, but he muſt likewiſe be always able to lay the emphaſis right, and in it's due proportion, as any variation in that will make a change alſo in the metre; it muſt be evident that this ſkill can be obtained only by a complete knowlege of the art of reading and ſpeaking with propriety: and this art, which perhaps is more difficult than any other, can only be acquired, as the reſt are, by ſtudy precept, and example. Since therefore the people of this country have never applied themſelves to the ſtudy of this art, nor have ever been furniſhed with precepts or examples, it muſt neceſſarily follow, that a general ignorance in that reſpect has always prevailed here. The conſequence of which general ignorance was, that the poets were of courſe obliged to bring down their verſes to the capacity of their readers, and to write only in ſuch meaſures as might be moſt obvious, and in ſuch numbers as might be moſt eaſily diſtinguiſhed by an uncultivated ear. Hence it came to paſs, that rhime, which could be univerſally perceived by all readers, became univerſally uſed by the poets; and our heroic meaſure, which was capable of an almoſt endleſs variety, was in general reduced to one uniform Iambic movement, which

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of all others is the moſt eaſily perceived, as it requires only a reſt of the voice on every ſecond ſyllable. To ſhew this neceſſity brought upon our poets in it's true light, it will be proper to take notice that their works were never publickly recited, as thoſe of the Romans were, amongſt whom ſkilful readers trained to the purpoſe could ſet off the variety of their numbers, by ſuitably varied tones; but were only to be privately read by each individual, utterly unſtudied, and unſkilled in that art. It was impoſſible that ſuch readers could perceive the harmony of numbers reſulting from the various combinations of different feet, tho' they might eaſily enough become maſters of a ſimple modulation made by a ſucceſſive repetion of one regular movement. As the Iambic foot is by far the moſt pleaſing of thoſe out of which a verſe can be formed without the admiſſion of any other, and as it is the only one which in the Engliſh heroic could anſwer that end, it of courſe came to be moſt generally uſed. By this general uſe, the hearer became ſo habituated to the ſonnd, that it was made the common ſtandard of meaſurement, and the admiſſion of any other feet into the verſe would ſound like diſcord to ears formed to that particular cadence. Thus the ignorance of readers gave bounds to the ſkill of the poet, as the ſkill of the poet could not be perceived by, and conſequently could have no influence over, the ignorance of readers. All that was left to the writers in this caſe was to take advantage of this general want of knowlege, and turn it to their own

account,

account, by making it the means of leſſening their own labour, and of giving pleaſure with as little expence of time and pains as poſſible. And theſe ends were effectually anſwered by conforming to the prevailing bad taſte. For, as it was before obſerved, there can be no doubt but that it is infinitely leſs difficult to rhime completely, than to compoſe numerous and harmonious verſes. To which it may be added, that it will require much leſs labour to proceed in one regular uniform movement, which is rendered eaſy by a little practice, than to be perpetually employed in finding out and chuſing ſuch combinations of various feet as will produce the fineſt harmony, and give the greateſt force of expreſſion to each particular thought.

Here it may be ſaid, that the poets by conforming to theſe rules muſt be defeated in their end of giving pleaſure, as ſuch a vicious uniformity of cadence, and ſuch a perpetual jingle at the end of each diſtich, muſt in any long work occaſion ſatiety and diſguſt to the ear. But againſt this the writers had a twofold barrier. For, in the firſt place, their compoſitions being read only in the cloſet are hardly ever pronounced aloud, and the eye can not be at all affected by looking over a perpetual ſucceſſion of the ſame ſort of movements, tho' the ear would be hurt by hearing them ſounded. And one thing has contributed to occaſion a general deluſion in this reſpect, which is, that moſt readers ſelect a few ſhining paſſages out of a favourite

favourite author, which they get by heart, and repeat aloud; and theſe being compoſed of feet which form a very agreeable cadence, as well as ſuch a one as is pronounced with eaſe, will for ſo much give great delight and ſatisfaction. And the reader is apt to form a judgement of the whole poem by theſe ſpecimens. Whereas were the whole to be recited, he would ſoon be convinced how much he had erred. He would then feel, that nothing can be ſo diſagreeable to the ear as a conſtant uniformity of cadence, and the more ſmooth and flowing the numbers are, the more likely are they to occaſion diſguſt by any long ſucceſſive repetition. Sweetneſs of ſound being in this reſpect to the ear, what that of taſte is to the palate *. If the admirers even of Pope want to be convinced of this truth by experience, far more prevailing than arguments, let them only allot two or three hours of a morning to the reading aloud ſuch of his pieces as are in the higheſt reputation for numbers, and their taſte muſt be much corrupted indeed, if they do not find great wearineſs and ſatiety, before half the time be paſſed. Thus the defects in their meaſure became ſecure of diſcovery, by being generally ſubmitted to a ſenſe which could not judge of it; and rhime was eſtabliſhed

* This point can not be more clearly proved than by conſidering, that even in muſic, a continued and unvaried ſtrain of modulation will occaſion ſatiety, and grow irkſome to the ear, and that is only by a judicious mixture of diſcords with concords that an agreeable harmony can be formed.

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by the ſtrong power of cuſtom, which has made it be conſidered as an eſſential and ſhining ornament of our poetry. So that whilſt there are more readers who can perceive the cadence of a ſimple modulation, and the jingle of ſimilar ſounds, than can diſtinguiſh the harmony reſulting from the varied combinations of different movements, ſuch as have built their poems on the former rules will never want a ſufficient number of admirers.

But in order to make a more ſecure barrier to their ill-founded eſtabliſhment, leſt people ſhould open their eyes, and ſee their error, the poets have contrived to miſlead their judgment, by laying down a falſe rule, which muſt for ever keep them at a diſtance from all knowlege of numbers: that is, that an Engliſh heroic verſe is compoſed of ten ſemipeds, or ſyllables. A rule ſo contrary to common ſenſe, to experience, and which has been productive of ſuch miſchief to our language by multiplying unneceſſary abbreviations, that it is wonderful how it ever obtained. To talk of meaſure made up of ſemipeds, is like talking of tunes compoſed out of half tones. If the rule be juſt that ten ſyllables will make a verſe, ten ſhort ones will anſwer the end as well as ten long. Now as a long ſyllable takes double the time of pronouncing that a ſhort one does, it will follow, that one line may be of double the length to the ear that another is; and what a ſtrange inequality as well as irregularity, when we come to conſider in what various proportions this may be uſed, muſt

not

not this introduce into our meaſure? Indeed this rule is founded upon a principle, neither more nor leſs abſurd, than making the eye ſole arbiter of ſound: that is, becauſe ſyllables of written words may appear to the eye to be of equal length, the ear muſt receive the law from that, and be compelled to admit them to be ſo, contrary to it's immediate conviction, when they are ſounded. But as the works of our poets were chiefly to be ſubmitted to the eye, they were in the right to increaſe the authority and power of that as much as poſſible; and by this means they were able at laſt to eſtabliſh a certain rule to all readers however erroneous it might be; for the eye can not be miſtaken in the number of ſyllables, tho' an ill-informed ear might be in their length or ſhortneſs. By eſtabliſhing this judicial power in the eye, they alſo gained a vaſt acquiſition to the number of rhimes, ſince all compounded of ſimilar letters paſſed muſter before ſo incompetent a judge, which the ſkilful ear would have rejected on account of the diſſimilitude of ſound. Yet with whatever induſtry this rule was propagated amongſt the readers, the writers were too wiſe to follow it in their compoſitions. They knew it was incapable of producing either harmony, cadence, or meaſure. The only uſe therefore of this falſe light was to guide people wrong, that they might not pry too curiouſly into their numbers, which would not bear a cloſe inſpection.

The abbè du Bos has treated of this matter with great accuracy, in a compariſon which he has

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drawn between the French and Latin poetry. I ſhall ſelect a few paſſages from him, which will ſerve to illuſtrate the ſubject, and at the ſame time, by affording us a comparative view of the French meaſure with ours, will ſhew what a vaſt ſuperiority we are capable of having over them in that reſpect. After having made it clear, that the obſervation of the rules of Latin poetry was a neceſſary cauſe of numbers and meaſure, he adds,

'Now it is ſaying a vaſt deal in praiſe of the rules 'of Latin poetry, to maintain that they execute 'one half and more of the work; and that the 'poet's ear is charged only with one point, that 'is, with minding to render the verſes melodious, 'by a happy mixture of the ſound of the ſyllables 'whereof they are compoſed. I ſhall endeavour 'now to prove, that the obſerving of the rules of 'French poetry is productive of neither of thoſe 'effects; that is, that French verſes exactly con-'formable to thoſe rules may be deſtitute of 'numbers and harmony in the pronunciation.

'The rules of French poetry determine only 'the arithmetical number of ſyllables, whereof 'the verſes are to conſiſt. They decide nothing 'with regard to the quantity that is in poetry, 'with reſpect to the length and brevity of thoſe 'ſyllables. But as the ſyllables in French words 'are ſometimes long and ſometimes ſhort in the 'pronunciation, there are ſeveral inconveniencies 'ariſing from the ſilence of our rules with re-'ſpect to their combination. In the firſt place

'it

'it happens, that ſeveral French verſes, which 'have nothing to be reproached with in point of 'rules, contain nevertheleſs too long a ſucceſſion 'of ſhorter or longer ſyllables. Now the too 'great length of this ſucceſſion obſtructs the num-'bers in the pronunciation of the verſes.

'The rhythmus, or cadence of a verſe, conſiſts 'in the alternative of long and ſhort ſyllables va-'ried according to a particular proportion. Too 'great a number of long ſyllables ranged ſucceſ-'ſively one after another retards the progreſſion 'of the verſe in the pronunciation. Too great a 'number of ſhort ſyllables ſucceeding one an-'other immediately renders it diſagreeably preci-'pitant.

'Secondly, it falls out frequently, that when 'we have a mind to examine two Alexandrine 'French verſes connected together by the ſame 'rhime, with regard to the time in pronuncing 'each verſe, we find an enormous difference be-'tween the length of theſe verſes, tho' they are 'both compoſed according to the rules. Let ten 'ſyllables out of twelve, which compoſe a maſcu-'line verſe, be long; and let ten ſyllables of the 'following verſe be ſhort; theſe verſes, which 'will appear equal on paper, will be of a ſurpriſe-'ing inequality in the pronunciation. Where-'fore theſe verſes, notwithſtanding their being 'allied to one another, and anſwering by one 'common rhime, will loſe nevertheleſs all the 'cadence which might ariſe from the equality

'of

'of their meaſure. Now 'tis not the eye, but
'the ear, which judges of the cadence of verſes.
'This inconvenience does not, as I have alrea-
'dy obſerved, attend ſuch as write Latin verſes,
'by reaſon that the rules prevent it. The arith-
'metical number of ſyllables, which conſtitutes
'each kind of Latin verſe, is determined with re-
'gard to the length or brevity of theſe ſyllables.
'Theſe rules, which were made from obſerving
'the ſuitable proportion in each kind of verſe be-
'tween the arithmetical number and the quan-
'tity of ſyllables, decide in the firſt place, that
'in the particular feet of a verſe we ought to put
'ſyllables of a certain quantity. Secondly, when
'theſe rules leave the poet at liberty to em-
'ploy long or ſhort ſyllables in a particular
'part of the verſe, they direct him, in caſe
'he chuſes to uſe long ſyllables, to employ
'then a leſſer number of ſyllables. If the poet
'determines in favour of ſhort ſyllables, he is or-
'dered by the rules to uſe a greater number. Now
'as the pronouncing of a long ſyllable conti-
'nues double the ſpace of time that a ſhort one
'does, all the Latin hexameters are conſequently
'of the ſame length in the pronunciation, tho'
'ſome contain a greater number of ſyllables than
'others. The quantity of ſyllables is always
'compenſated by their arithmetical number.
'Hence the Latin hexameters are always equal
'in the pronunciation, notwithſtanding the va-
'riety of their progreſſion; whereas our Alexan-
'drine verſes are frequently unequal, tho' they
'have

'have almoſt conſtantly an uniformity of pro-
'greſſion. Hence ſome critics have been of opi-
'nion, that it was almoſt impoſſible to write a
'French epic poem of ten thouſand verſes with
'any ſucceſs. True it is, that this uniformity of
'the rhythmus has not obſtructed the ſucceſs of
'our dramatic poems in France and foreign
'countries; but thoſe poems which do not ex-
'ceed two thouſand verſes have ſufficient excel-
'lencies to ſuſtain them, notwithſtanding the ſa-
'tiety of the likeneſs of their numbers. Beſides
'it is leſs obſerved on the ſtage, where theſe ſorts
'of pieces appear with greateſt luſtre, by reaſon
'that the actors, before they fetch their breath,
'run one verſe into another, or elſe fetch it be-
'fore they have finiſhed the verſe, to prevent our
'being ſo ſenſible of the vitious uniformity of it's
'cadence.

'What has been here ſaid with reſpect to hex-
'ameters may be equally applied to any other
'kind of verſe. Thoſe which run precipitately
'by reaſon of their being compoſed of ſhort ſyl-
'lables laſt therefore as long as ſuch as go a very
'ſlow pace, becauſe of their being compoſed of
'long ſyllables. For example, Virgil uſes ſhort
'ſyllables as much as the rules of metre permit-
'ed him in that verſe, in which he draws ſo
'complete a picture of a courſer in full gallop,
'that the very ſound of the verſe makes us ima-
'gine we hear the noiſe of his motion.

'*Quadrupedante putrem ſonitu quatit ungula*
'*campum.*

'The

'This verſe contains ſeventeen ſyllables, but it 'does not continue longer in the pronunciation 'than the following verſe of thirteen, in which 'Virgil deſcribes the Cyclops at work, and lift-'ing up their arms to ſtrike the hammers on the 'anvil, an effect which is well repreſented in the 'cadence of the verſe.

'*Olli inter ſe multa vi brachia tollunt.*

'Thus the cadence of verſe is not at all inter-'rupted by uſing a greater number of ſhort or 'long ſyllables, in order to give a better deſcripti-'on of the object.'

From what is here ſaid it is evident, that the rules of French poetry neither produced equality of meaſure, nor variety of numbers, which are the only ſources of harmony in verſe. The writers therefore endeavoured to conceal the want of equality in meaſure by an uniformity of cadence, and to compenſate for the want of variety of numbers by rhime. How poor a ſuccedaneum theſe were, muſt be known to every reader of taſte. The ingenuous critics of France, far from boaſting of their poetry, have acknowleged its defects, and lamented the poverty of their language, which would admit of no other ornaments than what were prejudicial to it in it's moſt eſſential points. This is ſtrongly ſet forth by Du Bos, where he conſiders the difficulties brought upon a French poet by being under the double reſtraint, of following the natural order of words, and of rhiming. As to the firſt, he obſerves, 'That a Latin writer may eaſily avoid

'any

'any diſagreeable colliſion of ſounds by the help 'of tranſpoſition; whereas it is very rare that one 'can get rid of this difficulty in French by means 'of ſuch an expedient. There is very ſeldom 'any other reſource left but that of altering the 'word which interrupts the harmony of the 'phraſe, or elſe to make the latter fall a victim 'to the former. Nothing is more difficult than 'to preſerve the reſpective rights of ſenſe and 'harmony, when we write in French; ſo great 'is the claſhing of their ſeveral intereſts.'

In another place where he conſiders the effect of this reſtraint, added to that of rhime, he ſays, 'That rhime alone becomes, thro' the ſubjection 'of the French phraſe to the natural order of 'words, as checking a reſtraint for an ingenious 'poet, as all the rules of Latin poetry. In ef- 'fect, we ſeldom obſerve, even in the moſt in- 'different Latin poets, thoſe idle epithets that 'are employed as mere expletives to fill up the 'verſe; but what numbers of them do not we 'meet with, even in our beſt poems, introduced 'by the ſole neceſſity of rhiming? Without en- 'larging any farther on this article of the diffi- 'culty of rhiming, the reader will give me leave 'to refer him to Boileau's epiſtle to Lewis the 'fourteenth on the paſſage of the Rhine; as alſo 'to the epiſtle written by the ſame poet to Mo- 'liere. There he will ſee better than I can tell 'him, that if rhime be a ſlave whoſe duty it is 'to obey, yet it coſts a great deal to reduce this 'ſlave to a proper ſtate of ſubjection?'

Rollin has treated of this matter only ſuperficially, and has not, like Du Bos, dived to the bottom. Nor has he conſidered it with the ſame candour and impartialty, but has ſhewn evident marks of prepoſſeſſion in favour of the French tongue. He ſays, * 'The different taſtes of 'different nations in point of verſification has 'ſomething in it very ſurpriſing. What in one 'language is extremely agreeable, in another is 'inſipid, and the mark of a bad taſte; rhimes 'for inſtance, which have ſo good an effect in 'modern poetry, and ſtrike ſo agreeably upon 'the ear in French, Italian, Spaniſh, and High-'Dutch, are ſhocking in Greek and Latin; and 'in like manner the meaſure of the Greek and 'Latin verſes, which depend upon the quantity 'of ſyllables, would have no grace in our modern 'poetry.

'There is one thing in this diverſity of taſte, 'which very much puzzles me, and that is, why 'rhimes, which pleaſe ſo much in one language, 'ſhould be ſo ſhocking in another. Can this dif-'ference ariſe from habit and cuſtom, or is it de-'rived from the nature of languages?

'The French poetry (and the ſame may be 'ſaid of all the modern languages) abſolutely 'wants the delicate and harmonious variety of 'feet, which gives numbers, ſmoothneſs, and 'grace, to the Greek and Latin verſification, 'and is forced to be content with the uniform

* Belles let. vol. i. b. ii. ch. 2.

'joining

'joining together of a certain number of ſyllables 'of equal meaſure in the compoſition of it's 'verſes. To arrive therefore at it's proper end, 'which is pleaſing the ear, it is under a neceſſity 'of ſeeking out for other graces and charms, and 'ſupplying what is wanting, by the exactneſs, 'cadence, and plenty of rhimes, which make up 'the principal beauty of the French verſification."

Yet tho' he has allowed ſo much in this place, in another, where he has more particularly enumerated the great advantages which the Greek and Roman languages have over the French in other reſpects, he concludes with this extraordinary queſtion, 'And yet notwithſtanding all 'theſe ſeeming impediments, can it be perceived 'from the writings of good authors, that our 'language is in any wiſe defective, either as to 'copiouſneſs, variety, harmony, or any other 'grace?' A queſtion which carries with it ſuch an apparent ſtamp of prejudice, that it is aſtoniſhing how it could have dropped from the pen of a writer, in general remarkable for accuracy and penetration. The abſurdity of ſuch a method of ſettling the point can not be ſhewn in a clearer light, than by ſuppoſing the ſame queſtion put to a Dutchman, Swede, Norwegian, Ruſſian, or the native of any country where the language is in the moſt uncultivated ſtate; and it will undoubtedly be decided by each of them in favour of their own, from a natural affection to their mother tongue. Nor is this prejudice peculiar to barbarians only, or the offspring of ignorance, for we

find even amongſt the poliſhed Greeks, that tho' the Attick idiom was allowed to be the pureſt of all others, yet the other ſtates of Greece tenaciouſly adhered to their reſpective dialects, from the inſuperable force of early impreſſions and habit.

But whatever neceſſity the French and other modern tongues may be under to make uſe of rhime, and the imperfect rule of meaſure which they have employed, the Engliſh alone, from the very genius and conſtitution of the language, need not ſubmit to thoſe reſtraints. On the contrary, from whatever lucky concurrence of circumſtances it hath happened, it may be proved to be ſuperior in it's qualities not only to all the modern, but upon the whole to the admired languages of antiquity. Whether it be, that as in the well-known ſtory of the painter's ſpunge, the accidental blending of the different colours produced a more natural foam on the horſe, than the utmoſt ſkill of the pencil could have drawn, ſo the variety of tongues, out of which ours has been compoſed, has caſually formed one more perfect in it's nature than the utmoſt labour or art of men could have contrived; or from whatever other cauſe it may proceed, the fact is certainly ſo, that we are poſſeſſed of one more capable of anſwering all the purpoſes of ſpeech, whether of uſe or ornament, than any that has hitherto exiſted upon earth. The very reaſons aſſigned by the French writers why their language was incapable of meaſure or numbers ſhew that ours is capable of both. The chief of which are given by Rollin, when in ſpeaking

ing of the Romans he ſays, 'They had a thou-
'ſand delicacies in their delivery, which we are
'ſtrangers to. They diſtinguiſhed the accent
'from quantity, and knew very well how to raiſe
'a ſyllable, without making it long, which we are
'not accuſtomed to obſerve. They had even ſeve-
'ral ſorts of long and ſhort vowels, and expreſſed
'the difference.' Whoever can read Engliſh with propriety will ſee, that this is the very caſe of our language, tho' theſe beauties are loſt to a vitiated ear. This diſtinction between accent and quantity, which Capella* calls the very ſoul of ſounds and the foundation of harmony, *animam vocum & muſices ſeminarium*, may be conſtantly perceived in a juſt and correct pronunciation. We too can raiſe a ſyllable without adding to it's length. And as to the long and ſhort vowels, we have as copious a uſe of them as ever the Romans had, and much more ſo, as well as more eaſily to be diſtinguiſhed now, as Latin is pronounced. Every vowel with us is ſometimes long, and ſometimes ſhort, and their different quantities are marked by different pronunciations, which is not the caſe of the Latin at preſent, as we can not know the different ſounds given to them by the antients, according to their quantity, in their ſpeech. We have the uſe of the *ceſura* too in as great a latitude as they, ſince it may be at the end of any ſyllable of an Engliſh verſe, the laſt of courſe excepted. Whereas the *ceſura* of the French is ever in the middle of the verſe, which cauſes a perpetual ſameneſs of cadence. So that we are

not only poſſeſſed of all the ſame ſources of harmony with the antients, but we have one ſuperadded, which is the cauſe of a greater variety, and more forcible expreſſion in numbers than all the reſt, that is, the unlimited power given to the emphaſis over quantity, and cadence, by means whereof a neceſſary union between ſound and ſenſe, numbers and meaning in verſification, unknown to the antients, has been brought about. From all theſe, together with the very ſtructure of our language, a particular ſort of meaſure has reſulted, capable of ſuch a variety of movements, that it can alone ſupply the place of moſt of the different ſorts uſed by the antients in their different ſtyles of poetry. The Engliſh blank verſe is equally well ſuited to the heroic, tragic, comic, paſtoral, elegiac, and didactic ſtyles of poetry. Nor is this aſſertion founded on theory only and ſpeculation, but warranted by practice, and confirmed by proofs. The Paradiſe loſt ſufficiently ſhews it's fitneſs for heroic poetry. In the works of Shakeſpear we may eaſily diſcover, that it is the moſt proper metre for tragedy ever yet made uſe of: if the rule be well founded (as it undoubtedly is) that the beſt meaſure for tragic compoſitions is that wherein leaſt art appears, and which approaches neareſt to diſcourſe. The ſame alſo may be ſeen in ſome of his comedies, of the more grave and * elevated kind, as the Tempeſt, Meaſure for Meaſure, &c. In ſome of our Engliſh pa-

* Interdum tamen & tollit comœdia vocem. Hor.

ſtorals

ſtorals, notwithſtanding it is robbed of it's ſimplicity by rhimes, we may ſee how admirably well it would ſuit the nature of that ſort of poetry, were it in the hands of a real genius, who was above wearing ſo improper an ornament. Milton's Lycidas affords an example of it's elegiac powers; and the Cyder of Philip's of it's didactic. It may be ſaid that the heroic meaſure of the antients was alſo uſed in their paſtoral and didactic poetry, as in the eclogues and georgics of Virgil. But in regard to the former, every reader of taſte muſt ſee how ill ſuited it was to the ſubject, and how little the majeſty of the lines agreed with the meanneſs of the characters. The numbers ſeem rather to be the compoſition of ſome poet in an Arcadian court, than the natural and uncultivated ſtrains of ſimple ruſtics. And in regard to the latter, whoever will compare the didactic part of the georgics only, omitting the captivating epiſodes, with the poem on cyder by Philips, will ſoon be convinced of the advantage which the Engliſh poet had over the Roman in point of the aptitude of his meaſure to his matter. Horace has uſed it too in his ſatyrs and epiſtles; but in order to make his verſes, as he himſelf expreſſes it, *ſermoni propiora*, he in fact only uſed the feet of heroic meaſure, but had little regard to the numbers or cadence, on which account they often offend the ear. Whereas nothing is leſs difficult than to preſerve a proper degree of eaſe and familiarity in writings of that ſort, by means of Engliſh blank verſe, without

offending againſt the rules of harmony. Add to all theſe it's uſe in a new vein of poetry, and perhaps not one of the moſt unpleaſant kind, whereof no traces remain in the writings of antiquity, the grave burleſque, as in the Splendid ſhilling of Philips. This great variety of poetic ſtyles, which it is capable of ſupplying, is a ſufficient confirmation of what I have advanced before in regard to our blank verſe, that it may be compoſed out of almoſt all the various feet uſed in all the various kinds of Latin poetry, ſince nothing elſe could make it equally adapted to ſo many different ſpecies of it, in which the Romans were obliged to make uſe of different meaſures, or to uſe the heroic very improperly in ſome of them. If therefore the proportion of movements, or feet, which our heroic meaſure admits, be to theirs as ſeven to two, it neceſſarily follows that we have an infinite advantage over them in point of variety and expreſſion, and conſequently, that ours in all works of length muſt be much more pleaſing. It is therefore better adapted to the two nobleſt of all human compoſitions, the epic poem and tragedy.

If it be ſaid, that ſuppoſing we have this advantage over them in point of variety of numbers, yet their language muſt ever have a ſuperiority over ours with regard to ſound, from the happy conſtruction of their words: that this muſt evidently appear by comparing both with the infallible rule laid down by Quinctilian, *Ut ſyllabæ e litteris melius ſonantibus clariores ſunt, ita verba e ſyllabis magis vocalia; & quo plus quæque ſpiritus*

ſpiritus habet, eo auditu pulchrior *: and that therefore in all leſſer compoſitions, ſuch as odes, and lyric poetry, they have a peculiar grace and ſweetneſs which we can never arrive at, nor even attempt any thing in that way without the aid of rhime: my anſwer is, that if their language be compared in this reſpect with ours as it now ſtands, we muſt undoubtedly yield the preference to them. But this defect in ours does not ariſe from the genius and conſtitution of our language, but from the abuſes and corruptions crept into it thro' the want of care and cultivation. Nor was the perfection of the Roman in this reſpect owing to chance, or the original formation of their words, but to the great pains taken to poliſh and adorn it. We have it from undoubted authority, that, previous to the ſtudy of eloquence, their language was in a very bad ſtate as to ſound, and their words ill ſuited to poetical compoſitions. Were the fifth part of the labour beſtowed upon ours which was upon theirs, we might perhaps rival them even in this reſpect. Nay, had our language not been induſtriouſly ſpoiled and mangled, had not ſuch numbers of our vowels been ſwallowed up by the monſter rhime, it might without much application or pains not have been inferior to the Latin in that point. For though we might be ſtill obliged to confeſs that their words are compoſed of ſyllables more vocal, yet ours would have more ſpirit; theirs might have more of ſweetneſs, but ours of energy;

* Lib. viii. c. 5.

theirs might be better conſtituted to form melodious, but ours to produce harmonious combinations. Were the pleaſing flow of the ſyllables to the ear alone ſufficient to the perfection of ſound in a language, the Greek and Roman both muſt yield to the modern Italian. But too great attention to ſweetneſs will rob poetic numbers of their greateſt beauties, which are, variety, and expreſſion. Were our language to be ſtudied and improved to the pitch of perfection whereof it is capable, it would perhaps appear, that the qualities of ſound to fit it to all ſorts of poetical compoſitions are blended in more lucky proportions than in any other; and that we have on that account as great an advantage over the antients in point of numbers, as the invention and improvement of our muſical inſtruments have given us with reſpect to harmony. But in both caſes we have failed of the end, by an abuſe or neglect of the means which alone could give us a ſuperiority. The * author of a late ingenious treatiſe on muſical expreſſion has laid open the ſources of the bad taſte which at preſent prevails with reſpect to that art. As the fate of it's ſiſter poetry ſeems to be exactly ſimilar, and from ſimilar cauſes, I ſhall make uſe of what he has ſaid with regard to the one, to elucidate what I have advanced with relation to the other. He obſerves, 'That properly ſpeaking, there are but three 'circumſtances on which the worth of any mu-

* Aviſon's eſſay, &c.

'ſical

'ſical compoſition can depend. Theſe are, me-
'lody, harmony, and expreſſion. When theſe
'three are united in their full excellence, the
'compoſition is then perfect: if any of theſe are
'wanting or imperfect, the compoſition is pro-
'portionably defective. The chief endeavour
'therefore of the ſkilful compoſer muſt be, to
'unite all theſe varjous ſources of beauty in eve-
'ry piece; and never ſo far regard or idolize any
'one of them, as to deſpiſe and omit the other
'two.'

Every reader of diſcernment will ſee at once that this is exactly analogous to the numbers of poetry. He proceeds to ſhew the preſent errors and defects in theſe reſpects.

'The firſt error we ſhall note is, where the
'harmony, and conſequently the expreſſion, is
'neglected for the ſake of air, or rather an ex-
'travagant modulation. The preſent faſhionable
'extreme of running all our muſic into one ſingle
'part, to the utter neglect of all true harmony,
'is a defect much more eſſential than the neglect
'of modulation only, inaſmuch as harmony is
'the very baſis of all muſical compoſition.'

Is not this exactly ſimilar to the practice of our poets in making rhime the chief object of their attention, and uſing as much as poſſible one uniform movement in their verſes, to the great prejudice of harmony and expreſſion? in accounting for the ſpreading of this falſe taſte, he aſſigns the following as the chief cauſe.

'It

'It may perhaps be affirmed with truth, that 'the falſe taſte, or rather the total want of taſte 'in thoſe who *hear*, and who always aſſume to 'themſelves the privilege of *judging*, hath often 'produced this low ſpecies of muſic. For it 'muſt be owned that this kind of compoſition is 'apt, above all others, at firſt hearing to ſtrike 'an unſkilful ear; and hence the maſters have 'often ſacrificed their art to the groſs judgement 'of an indelicate audience.'

Is not this directly parellel to what has been before ſaid of poets and their readers? *

He has aſſigned a quite contrary cauſe for a corruption of a different kind, when comparing the ſtate of modern with antient muſic, he ſays, 'From the ſtructure of their inſtruments, we can 'not form any vaſt idea of their powers: they 'ſeem to have been inferior to thoſe in uſe at 'preſent: but which, indeed, being capable of 'as much execution as expreſſion, are only ren-'dered more liable to be abuſed. Thus the too 'great compaſs of our modern inſtruments, 'tempting as well the compoſer as performer, to 'exceed the natural bounds of harmony, may be

* And if a falſe taſte could be ſo generally propagated from this cauſe, in a ſcience founded upon certain principles and eſtabliſhed rules, which are open to the knowlege of all inquirers, how much more likely is it to be the caſe in an art, where the ſtudious can find no principles to found their judgements upon, nor no rules to be their guides, except a few that are falſe, which will certainly miſlead them?

'one

'one reaſon, why ſome authors have ſo warmly 'eſpouſed the cauſe of the antient muſic, and run 'down that of the modern.'

Here indeed the compariſon does not hold. Our poets, far from running riot on account of their abundance, have ſtarved themſelves in the midſt of plenty. And thro' their want of ſkill in the management of their inſtrument, inſtead of their producing the great variety of tones whereof it is capable, they have confined themſelves to a few ſimple modulations, which make it appear to have a leſs compaſs than thoſe of the antients. And this was a natural conſequence of not ſtudying our language, without which it was impoſſible we could know it's peculiar graces or force; or perceive what ſort of numbers were beſt ſuited to it's genius. Nothing was left us in this caſe, but imitation; and as it was ſoon found that the Roman meaſures could not be adopted into our tongue, we followed the track of our neighbours, and built our poetry upon their rules. Thus did we ſubmit thro' choice to all the imperfections under which theirs laboured from neceſſity. We blindly conſidered our language as formed upon the ſame Gothic model as the other European tongues, and, thro' want of enquiry, did not know that ours alone had luckily retained all the qualities which gave ſuch charms to antient poetry; beſides ſome peculiar to ourſelves, which, properly uſed, give us a ſuperiority over them. We did not know that amidſt all their variety of meaſures, in their different ſpecies of poetry, there is

not

not one to which we either have not, or may not have, ſomething analogous in ours, and for the moſt part more perfect in it's kind. Our blindneſs in this reſpect is at this day the more extraordinary, becauſe it is no longer a thing in embryo, to be ſeen only thro' microſcopes, but we have proofs of it glaring as day-light, and the full-grown perfect productions ſtare us in the face. But *we have eyes and ſee not, ears have we and we hear not.* How few are there capable of knowing, that Milton does not exceed Homer and Virgil in any thing ſo much as in his numbers? And if it can be proved that we excel them in that reſpect in the more ſublime compoſitions of epic and tragic poetry, no one can pretend to ſay that we might not vie with them even in the lyric, were our language cultivated and reſtored to it's purity. We have at leaſt one inſtance to ground this opinion upon, which is, that the Engliſh can boaſt of the moſt perfect ode that ever was produced in any language, in point of variety, harmony, and expreſſion in it's numbers; and were it not diſgraced by rhime, it muſt, in the opinion of the moſt delicate and unprejudiced judges, bear away the palm from all antiquity. I mean the ode on St. Cecilia's day, by Mr. Dryden. If our language in it's corrupt ſtate were capable of ſo much, what might we not hope for from it were it poliſhed and refined? Should we recover a true taſte, and by diſcarding rhime make room for our baniſhed vowels, who knows, when the ſound of our words was rendered more

melodious,

melodious, what pleaſing meaſures a true genius might yet diſcover; and what bold Pindaric flights he might take when his wings were full grown, and his fetters taken off? Leſt we ſhould too haſtily determine with reſpect to the number and kinds of meaſure which the genius of our language will admit, by what has been already done, be it remembered that Horace, the *numeroſus Horatius*, was the firſt who diſcovered to the Romans, in his odes, the variety of numbers of which their language was capable, notwithſtanding it had been for ſome time in it's utmoſt ſtate of perfection before he began to write.

The general ignorance, which has prevailed in regard to this point, will not ſeem at all ſurpriſeing to any one who conſiders, that it is impoſſible to know any thing of poetical numbers without ſkill in reading. The verſes of a poet, and the compoſitions of the maſter in muſic, are in this reſpect exactly on a par. Let us ſuppoſe a country where the ſcience of muſic was at a very low ebb, and the inſtruments proportionably poor: let us ſuppoſe that men of the moſt excellent genius in that art ſhould ariſe in ſuch a country: could they poſſibly ſhew their ſkill beyond what was in the compaſs of thoſe inſtruments to perform? Suppoſe one of uncommon abilities ſhould be able to ſet down upon paper compoſitions of the nobleſt and ſublimeſt harmony, muſt they not be entirely unknown, if it was impoſſible to have them executed? Is it not to be ſuppoſed that all muſicians, who ſought either fame or profit

would,

would, in ſuch a country, confine themſelves to ſuch ſtrains and modulations, as were beſt ſuited to their inſtruments, without waſting their time in laborious reſearches into an uſeleſs theory, which could not be reduced to practice? Could it be expected that any genius, ever ſo towering, ſhould be ſo diſintereſted, as to employ himſelf entirely in works, which could neither add to his reputation or advantage whilſt alive, in hopes that proper inſtruments might afterwards be invented, which in the hands of ſkilful performers might diſplay their beauties and gain him honour with a late poſterity? Nay, let us ſuppoſe that he could invent proper inſtruments, or import them together with proper performers from ſome other country, would he not find it difficult to alter an eſtabliſhed national taſte, till the art was firſt ſtudied, and a true taſte introduced, founded upon the knowlege of the rules? It would be a difficult matter to perſuade an ignorant Highlander that any inſtrument is ſo agreeable to the ear as the bag-pipe; or an uncultivated Welſh or Iriſhman, that the harp is not ſuperior to the violin. Nor would all the rhetoric in the world prevail on them to believe, that a piece of Corelli's is at all comparable to one of their own wild airs. And this prevalence of cuſtom and early impreſſions is not peculiar to the rude and ignorant only, but is ſeen as remarkably in the moſt poliſhed countries. Every one knows with what raptures the Pariſian liſtens to the muſic of the French opera, which is diſagreeable

diſagreeable to the laſt degree, and grating to the ſkilful ear of all foreigners.

But the poetical compoſer is in every point under greater difficulties than the muſical. The works of the latter are publickly ſhewn in all their genuine beauty and force, by the hands of ſkilful performers regularly trained. So that he has a chance of having ſome good judges amongſt his auditors, as all perſons inclined to obtain a critical knowlege in that ſcience are furniſhed with examples, as well as rules, upon which to form their taſte. But the tune of the poet (if I may be allowed the expreſſion) is only ſung in private, in which every reader is to himſelf a performer. How ſkilful a one he is likely to be, may be judged by conſidering, that in an art infinitely more difficult than the muſical one he has neither rules nor example to guide him. So that if the inſtrument be out of tune, or the ear vitiated and bad, the performer will not be ſenſible of theſe defects in himſelf, but will attribute the fault to the poet's numbers. To ſuch a one, thoſe ſtrains which are moſt harmonious, and in which the poet's ſkill is moſt diſplayed, will appear moſt diſcordant. The more diverſified the cadence, the more varied the numbers are, the more diſagreeable and ill-formed will the verſes appear from an uniformity of pronunciation; an error into which unſkilful readers neceſſarily fall. To ſuch the introduction of different feet into the ſame meaſure, and their judicious combinations, appear only to create diſorder and confuſion, and the want of rhime is

with

with them the want of meaſure, which uſed to be their unerring guide in marking the cloſe. It is thus the Chineſe judge of the European pictures. For being accuſtomed to conſider the different excellence of their own, only in regard to the richneſs of the colouring, they ſee no beauty in ours, which they ſay have too many black ſpots in them, for ſo they call the ſhades.

Hence it is manifeſt that our poets, if they expected to be read with pleaſure, were obliged to adapt their ſtrains to the capacity of their readers, and to make uſe only of ſuch numbers as could be moſt eaſily perceived. And hence aroſe that uniformity of cadence, and general uſe of rhime in their works. Thus as their taſk became extremely eaſy, they were ſaved the trouble of ſtudying the principles of their art, and ſet up at once for maſters, without ſerving any apprenticeſhip. They entered immediately upon the practice, without any knowlege of the theory; and inſtead of unerring rules to direct them, they had only two very uncertain guides, imitation and their own ear. Of all the poets who have written in our language, there ſeem to be but two, who have dived into the principles of verſification, and traced Engliſh numbers to their ſource. Theſe were Dryden, and Milton. What I have ſaid upon this ſubject will be ſufficiently exemplified by the different conduct of theſe two cotemporary writers, and the different reception which their works met with from the public. Dryden knew perhaps the theory of numbers as well as Milton, but was far

far from making the ſame uſe of his knowlege, which he turned wholly to ſerve his own purpoſe. He wrote for bread, which depended upon preſent fame; and preſent fame was to ariſe from pleaſing the preſent taſte. That once obtained, his book-ſeller, who never conſidered the intrinſic value, paid him in proportion to the bulk of his work, or the number of lines which it contained. As he was always a needy, he was of courſe an haſty writer. Poſſeſſed as he was of ſuch an happy knack of rhiming, he could have produced an hundred lines that would give delight on account of that ornament, in the ſame ſpace of time that he could have written ten, whoſe beauty depended upon the propriety and harmony of numbers, and whoſe charms, after all his pains, could not be perceived by the multitude of unſkilful readers. Many haſty thoughts would even appear beautiful on account of the richneſs of a rhime, which in blank verſe would paſs for puerile. Add to all this, that indulgence to all faults and errors in this kind of writing is much more eaſily granted, than in any other, from a ſuppoſed reſtraint which the poet lies under; when, in fact, to one poſſeſſed of a natural faculty in that reſpect, improved by habit, there is no ſtyle whatever ſo eaſy. When all this is conſidered, it can not be a matter of wonder, that Dryden ſhould do every thing in his power to keep up a taſte which was ſo perfectly adapted to his purpoſes, and to make it as extenſive as poſſible. With this view, he gave a remarkable inſtance of what has been before obſerved *, how much it

'is in the power of one ſingle perſon of reputation 'to introduce or confirm a bad taſte in a whole 'people,' by writing even tragedies in rhime, which were not only heard without diſguſt, but, as we are informed, gave great delight to the vitiated ear of thoſe times. Nor is it long ſince we have recovered taſte enough to baniſh thoſe monſtrous performances from the ſtage. Upon the whole Dryden was the reigning poet of his time, and his works were univerſally read and admired. Nor would the number of his votaries have been leſſened at this day, had not a ſucceſſor of more application, and greater leiſure, outdone him in his own arts.

But Milton acted upon principles directly oppoſite. Like the great poets of antiquity, he painted for eternity; only his conduct in this reſpect was infinitely more diſintereſted, as he gave up all chance of preſent fame. *His light ſhone forth in vain, for the darkneſs comprehended it not.* His almoſt divine poem of Paradiſe loſt was ſold for fifteen pounds, which was to have been received at three different payments, the laſt of which there is ſome reaſon to believe was never made: nor do we find that the bookſeller was a great gainer by the purchaſe. Yet notwithſtanding the unſuitable returns he met with, he ſtill proceeded with a noble zeal for the honour of his country, and it's language, to leave behind him the moſt perfect models, whoſe beauty, tho' loſt upon the blindneſs of a preſent age, might be perceived by a more enlightened poſterity. Nor could

could any mean or ſelfiſh motive induce him to ſwerve from that ſtrict rule of right, by which he ſquared all his poetical writings. To make uſe of the words of one of the moſt ingenious as well as judicious of the moderns, † 'The contempt, in 'which, perhaps, with juſtice, he held the age 'he lived in, prevented him from condeſcending 'either to amuſe or to inſtruct it. He had, be-'fore, given to his unworthy countrymen the 'nobleſt poem, that genius, conducted by antient 'art, could produce; and he had ſeen them re-'ceive it with diſregard, if not with diſlike. Con-'ſcious therefore of his own dignity, and of their 'demerit, he looked to poſterity only for reward, 'and to poſterity only directed his future labours. 'Hence it was perhaps, that he formed his Samp-'ſon Agoniſtes on a model more ſimple and ſevere 'than Athens herſelf would have demanded; and 'took Æſchylus for his maſter, rather than So-'phocles, or Euripides: intending by this conduct 'to put as great a diſtance as poſſible between 'himſelf and his cotemporary writers; and to 'make his work (as he himſelf ſaid) much differ-'ent from what amongſt them paſſed for the beſt.

'The ſucceſs of this poem was, accordingly, 'what one would have expected. The age, it 'appeared in, treated it with total neglect; nei-'ther hath that poſterity, to which he appealed, 'and which has done juſtice to moſt of his other 'writings, as yet given to this excellent piece it's 'full meaſure of popular and univerſal fame.'

† Maſon's ſecond letter, pref. to Elfrida.

Here

his Comus lay buried in obſcurity, 'till the luſtre of muſic ſhewed it to the public eye: and how little that was capable of perceiving it's beauties, might be ſeen from the reception it met with. For whilſt the muſician's ſkill was applauded to the ſkies, the poem itſelf was either not attended to, or only occaſioned wearineſs and ſatiety. It will be allowed by all, that had it not been for the ornament of the ſongs, the dramatic part could not have lived to a ſecond night: and the whole piece, ſince the muſic has loſt great part of it's charms with it's novelty, is now ſcarce able to hold up it's head. His Lycidas and ſome other pieces, for want ſome ſuch aſſiſtance, are ſtill in the ſhade.

A particular fatality ſeems to have attended Milton, different from the caſe of all other poets. Any one piece of allowed excellence, and general reputation, would be ſufficient, in any other writer, to excite the higheſt curioſity, to ſee whatever other compoſitions he might offer to the world, and to ſtamp a value upon them beyond their intrinſic merit. Whilſt in his caſe, tho' there never was any thing more univerſally allowed, than that he was the author of the nobleſt poem that has appeared in the Engliſh language, yet this has not induced many people to look into ſome of his other works, tho' they are really in their ſeveral kinds of equal perfection with that. And this is an inconteſtible proof, that however general the praiſe has been, and however laviſhly beſtowed on the Paradiſe loſt, the greateſt part of it aroſe from faſhion and authority; and whatever quantity

quantity of admiration it has excited, it has been for the moſt part only pretended. For if people were really as much pleaſed with that work, as they ſay, and would make us believe, what could ſtop them from purſuing the delight which they muſt neceſſarily receive from the peruſal of his other inimitable pieces?

The fact is, that tho' Milton has by the means abovementioned obtained univerſal fame, yet it is far from being founded upon a right and ſolid baſis. Faſhion, and the authority of a few allowed judges, may go a great way towards making a poem be talked of, and to obtain the incenſe of general praiſe, but this, as Macbeth ſays, is only

——— 'Mouth honour, breath,
'Which the poor ſlave ſhould fain deny, and
'dare not.'

The poetical, like the regal crown, can have no great ſecurity but in the hearts of the people; and the hearts of the people can be engaged to the poet only by the pleaſure and delight which his works afford them. Now tho' Milton has been put into poſſeſſion of his lawful ſcepter, and all the due homage attendant on that has been paid to him, yet his throne ſeems only to be founded on his right, and hath not as yet obtained the ſecurity of the people's affections.

The reaſon of this will at once be ſeen, when we reflect, that however ſome other points in a poem may to the judicious appear more eſſential,

yet it is by the charms of verſification alone that the multitude is caught. In poetry, as in painting, the unſkilful majority are more captivated by the colouring than the drawing. If therefore the works of Milton appear defective in this reſpect; if his verſes in general, far from giving pleaſure and delight, ſhould ſtrike the uncultivated or vitiated ears of the age, as diſcordant and unmuſical, the whole difficulty will at once be ſolved. His other merits, and excellencies, diſplayed by judicious critics, may procure him a few real, and ſhoals of pretended admirers; but can not gain him any lovers. Men may be reaſoned into eſteem, but not into affection. That ariſes from an involuntary delight, immediately perceived from a contemplation of the object which excites it. Mr. Addiſon has, with great accuracy and clearneſs, laid open the admirable art and profound judgment of Milton, in the choice and conduct of his fable, in the maſterly drawing of his characters, with ſuitable manners, and in the ſublimity and beauty of his ſentiment and diction. Theſe juſtly challenge our admiration, and demand our praiſe. But the charms of his numbers are ſtill covered as with a vail. The admirers of the antients, when they are compelled to allow him his due merits, yet add with a ſeeming concern, tho' with a ſecret ſatisfaction, that it is a pity ſo excellent a workman had ſuch poor materials, and the compoſitions of ſo great a genius had not the advantage of ſuch ornaments as the languages of Greece or Rome would have ſupplied:

whilſt

whilſt thoſe of modern taſte ſincerely ſigh for their dear rhime, and lament the want of that uniformity of cadence to which their ears had been tuned. But there is not one reader perhaps in five thouſand, who knows that the greateſt beauty of Milton is his verſification, and that he has excelled all the writers of all ages, and all countries, in the variety, expreſſion, and harmony of his numbers.

Nor will this appear a very extraordinary aſſertion when it is conſidered, that this is impoſſible to be known without perfect ſkill in reading; that we are neceſſarily corrupted in our firſt principles of that art, by ignorant maſters and falſe rules; and that there is not even an attempt made to amend this in the reſt of our lives. Whilſt therefore we remain in an ignorance of that art, we muſt as neceſſarily remain in a total ignorance of the true beauty and power of numbers, as we ſhould do in regard to muſical compoſitions where the inſtruments are defective and out of tune, or the players unſkilful. The poems of Milton muſt appear in the ſame light to us, as our pictures do to the Chineſe, and ſeem to have too many black ſpots in them. 'Till that art is ſtudied, we ſhall be ſo far from having it in our power to give that firſt of poets his due praiſe, that we ſhall be blind to ſome of his greateſt perfections; beſides the charms of verſification, we ſhall loſe ſome of the fineſt part of his imagery, and in many places not even be able to comprehend his full meaning.

Let us therefore apply ourſelves ſeriouſly, and with diligence, to a ſtudy capable of affording us ſuch delight. Let us no longer think, that to learn to read is ſufficient, but to read well, and then,

'Pleas'd we ſhall hear, and learn the ſecret power
'Of harmony, in tones, and numbers hit,
'By voice, or cadence.' *

Or, as the ſame author ſays in his treatiſe on education, if we ſet about this work, 'We ſhall 'be conducted to a hill ſide, laborious indeed at 'the firſt aſcent, but elſe ſo ſmooth, ſo green, ſo 'full of goodly proſpect, and melodious ſounds 'on every ſide, that the harp of Orpheus was not 'more charming.'

Let us examine our language with care, and ſearch into it's ſecret treaſures. Let us no longer be contented with a poor meagre vein of ore which we find near the ſurface, and which, after the French faſhon, ſerves us only to wiredraw, or gild over a baſer metal; but let us dig deep into the mine, where we ſhall find a plenteous vein, equal in richneſs, and ſuperior in magnitude, to that of the antients. Or if theirs ſhould be allowed to be of a purer kind, yet ours will be found to contain no more alloy in it, than what will render it more fit for all ſorts of workmanſhip.

* Parad. reg.

Too

Too long have the beauties of the Britiſh muſe, like thoſe of our ladies, been concealed, or ſpoiled, by foreign modes and falſe ornaments. The paint and patches of the French, the fantaſtical head-dreſs, the ſqueezing ſtays, and enormous hoop, only ſpoil the bloom of her complexion, the flowing ringlets of her hair, her eaſy ſhape, and graceful mein. Should a poliſhed Athenian ariſe, and behold her thus decked out, he would be aſtoniſhed to ſee, in a country enlightened by their rules and example, deformity made a ſcience, and barbariſm reduced to rule. Thus adorned like an harlot, ſhe inflames the youth with wanton deſires, and ſpreads infection thro' the land. What hopes can there be of a robuſt and healthy offspring from ſuch impure embraces? Let us endeavour to recover her from the tyrannical ſway of faſhion and prejudice, and reſtore her to her native rights. Let us leave to the ſallow French their rouge and white paint, but let the Britiſh red and white appear in it's genuine luſtre, as laid on by nature's own pencil. Let them torture the body into a a fantaſtic ſhape, or conceal crookedneſs under an armour of ſteel; let them cover puny limbs, and a mincing gait, under the wide circumference of an hoop; but let the eaſy mein, the comely ſtature, the fine proportioned limbs decently reveal-ed, and the unreſtrained majeſty of motion in the Britiſh muſe, be diſplayed to ſight in their native charms. Then ſhall ſhe move forth confeſſed the genuine ſiſter of the Grecian muſe, and not the leſs beautiful for being the younger. Then

ſhall her votaries burn with a pure and holy flame, and the poetical offſpring, from a chaſte marriage between ſenſe and harmony, will be found lovely, vigorous, and long-lived; inſtead of monſtrous chimæras, ſhapes flitting as clouds, and mere airy echoes produced from the wanton amours of ſound and fancy.

Upon the whole, were our language to be ſtudied and cultivated, we ſhould find, that in point of giving delight it would not yield to thoſe of antiquity; and that it is much better fitted for univerſal uſe. Were it reduced to rules, it might be more eaſily learned, and with more accuracy, as it is a living language. The true pronunciation may be acquired with certainty, on that account, from the mouth of a proper maſter; whereas we can at beſt only gueſs at that of the antients, and muſt therefore be ſtrangers to many beauties in theirs as to ſound. What in this caſe could hinder ours from being more univerſally propagated than any other, conſidering the great advantages we enjoy by means of general commerce, and a free preſs? And from the many excellent writings with which it is already enriched, together with thoſe which may hereafter be added, perhaps even of a ſuperior kind, ſhould men of equal genius ariſe, with the advantage of having their labour leſſened, and their way ſmoothed, why might there not be as fair a proſpect of immortality to our authors, as to the Greek and Roman? Nothing but the moſt ſhameful neglect in the people

can

can prevent the Engliſh from handing down to poſterity a third claſſical language, of far more importance than the other two.

CHAP. X.

Of the means whereby our language may be refined and aſcertained.

THE only ſcheme hitherto propoſed for correcting, improving, and aſcertaining our language, has been the inſtitution of a ſociety for that purpoſe. But this is liable to innumerable objections; nor would it be a difficult point to prove, that ſuch a method could never effectually anſwer the end. In the firſt place, it would be no eaſy matter to find a ſufficient number of members properly qualified to compoſe ſuch a ſociety; as there are few or none properly trained in the ſtudy of thoſe points, in regard to which they are to paſs judgement: and perhaps there would not be one who ſhould appear at ſuch a board, without fixed and rooted errors from the prejudices of a wrong education. If they were not properly qualified, their rules and determinations would be proportionably falſe, and defective. In this caſe we ſhould be in a worſe condition than without any rules at all. In the ſecond place, ſuppoſing them to proceed ever ſo rightly in their ſyſtem, tho' they might aſcertain the meaning of words, it would be impoſſible by any works which they

could publiſh to fix the ſound and pronunciation, as a knowlege of thoſe can be communicated only by ſpeech. And unleſs ſome means can be found to aſcertain thoſe, the language muſt be in a perpetual ſtate of fluctuation. But the chief reaſon, which muſt ever render ſuch a ſcheme abortive, ariſes from our conſtitution, and the genius of the people. The endeavours of ſuch a ſociety, in arbitrary governments under the ſanction and countenance of an abſolute prince, may be crowned with ſucceſs: but the Engliſh have no idea of ſubmitting to any laws, to which they do not give their own conſent. Tho' ſuch a ſociety were therefore to proceed upon the righteſt principles, they would find it difficult to get their ſelf-raiſed authority, had it even the ſanction of the higheſt powers, acknowleged by a ſtubborn free people, ever jealous of their rights, and naturally inclined to withſtand all uſurpations: and without a foundation on allowed authority their whole edifice muſt of courſe fall to the ground. But why ſhould we even think of following any methods purſued in the countries of ſlaves, and which at the beſt have fallen very ſhort of perfection, when we have before our eyes the example of a free people like ourſelves to guide us, and whoſe conduct in this point was followed by the moſt rapid and complete ſucceſs. The means which they employed are ſo exactly ſuited to our circumſtances and ſituation, that we only want to make uſe of them, to attain our end, with equal eaſe and certainty. It has been already ſhewn, that the ſtudy

ſtudy of eloquence was the neceſſary cauſe of improvement, and eſtabliſhment of the Roman language: and the ſame cauſe would infallibly produce the ſame effect with us. Were the ſtudy of oratory once made a neceſſary branch of education, all our youth of parts, and genius, would of courſe be employed in conſidering the value of words both as to ſound and ſenſe. The reſult of the reſearches of rational enquirers muſt be rules founded upon rational principles; and a general agreement amongſt the moſt judicious muſt occaſion thoſe rules to be as generally known, and eſtabliſhed, and give them the force of laws. Nor would theſe laws meet with oppoſition, or be obeyed with reluctance, inaſmuch as they would not be eſtabliſhed by the hand of power, but by common ſuffrage, in which every one has a right to give his vote: nor would they fail, in time, of obtaining general authority, and permanence, from the ſanction of cuſtom, founded on good ſenſe.

It has been already ſufficiently ſhewn, that we have all the ſame inducements to the ſtudy of eloquence, which the Romans had, together with ſome peculiar to ourſelves, of a more powerful nature: nothing therefore could poſſibly hinder us from endeavouring to acquire ſkill in ſo uſeful an art, but the want of proper maſters, who might be enabled to teach it with eaſe and certainty, by laying open it's principles, explaining them by examples, and affording themſelves

models and patterns for imitation to learners. Could this once be done, there is no doubt but that the Britiſh youth would be inflamed with as great an ardor to arrive at excellence in that art, as thoſe of Rome. For to omit all the more powerful incitements of fame, and profit, the very pleaſure reſulting to themſelves from the practice of it would be of itſelf a ſufficient motive to allure them to a cloſe application, and to confirm them in an habitual exerciſe. Cicero, who enjoyed all the advantages reſulting from a complete knowlege of this art, in the moſt eminent degree, does not ſcruple to ſay, in his Brutus, *Dicendi autem me non tam fructus, & gloria, quam ſtudium ipſum, exercitatioque delectat.* Since therefore there are ſuch ſtrong motives of profit, honour, and delight, to induce individuals to the ſtudy of oratory, and ſince their labours and advancement in that would in many points be attended with ſuch excellent effects to the public, but more eſpecially in the article of refining and eſtabliſhing our language, is it not a pity that no attempts are made towards the revival of that art? Too long has the Engliſh tongue been neglected, too long have all ſorts of corruptions and abuſes been ſuffered to make their way into it. It is not yet too late to amend all, tho' the ſame inattention continued for a few years longer may poſſibly reduce it to an irremediable ſtate. We have ſtronger reaſons than ever at this very juncture to take care that our language be not wholly deſtroyed.

deſtroyed. One ariſes from a new-fangled cuſtom introduced by ſome late authors of ſpelling words differently from their wiſer predeceſſors, and, out of a poor ambition of ſhewing their learning, omitting and changing ſeveral letters under pretence of pointing out their derivation. But theſe gentlemen do not conſider, that moſt of thoſe letters which ſeem uſeleſs to them, upon paper, or improper, are of the utmoſt conſequence to point out and aſcertain the pronunciation of words, which is already in too precarious a ſtate. So that if this cuſtom ſhould continue to increaſe, according to the caprice of every new writer, for a century more, the beſt authors we have will by that time appear as obſolete, and as difficult to be read, and underſtood, as Chaucer is at this day. *Principiis obſta.* Innovations are ever to be withſtood at firſt, ſince it has been often known that thoſe which in their beginnings have appeared too ſlight to merit regard have in time brought about the moſt total and ſurpriſing changes. There are alſo at preſent great endeavours uſed to introduce and eſtabliſh another cuſtom not leſs pernicious, and which may be attended with the moſt fatal conſequences. There are many perſons, and even large bodies of men, eſteemed amongſt the moſt learned, who being weary of the great uncertainty of pronunciation in our tongue, would reduce the whole to one invariable and general rule, that of throwing the accent as far back in our polyſyllables as poſſible. It is inconceivable that ſuch a thought

a thought ſhould have entered into the heads of any but barbarians: much leſs that perſons converſant in the Greek and Roman languages ſhould endeavour to eſtabliſh a practice ſo oppoſite to that of thoſe poliſhed nations. They can not but know, that no word in theirs was ever accented beyond the antepenultima, or laſt ſyllable but two, and if they were able to read, they would know that this was founded upon the juſteſt principles. Indeed nothing but a total ignorance of that art could poſſibly make them think of introducing a rule, which, if it obtained, would at once deſtroy all melody, harmony, and quantity, in our words, as well as derivative meaning.

We have at preſent alſo a much ſtronger inducement than ever to the ſtudy of our language, as the way has been ſmoothed and made eaſy by the late publication of Mr. Johnſon's dictionary. Without ſuch a work, indeed, the taſk muſt have been extremely laborious, if not impracticable. Nor can the great merit and utility of that performance ever be perceived without ſuch ſtudy. If that be brought about, the public will no longer have reaſon to lament, that one of ſuch uncommon genius, and abilities, ſhould have paſſed ſo much of his life in a kind of work, which has hitherto fallen to the lot of mean capacities. Nor will he himſelf have reaſon to regret them any irkſome and diſagreeable hours paſſed by him in a dry and laborious ſtudy, when he reflects on the proportion of fame which will attend it: ſince, if our language ſhould ever be fixed, he muſt be

be conſidered by all poſterity as the founder, and his dictionary as the corner ſtone.

As the cultivation and eſtabliſhment of that can be effected by no other means, but by the introduction of the ſtudy of eloquence, I ſhall cloſe this head with a few paſſages from Quinctilian, wherein the objections which may ariſe on account of the difficulty of arriving at excellence in that art are fully anſwered, and the motives to engage men in the purſuit are diſplayed in the brighteſt colours.

* 'With ſo many maſters, and with ſuch a 'number of models, hath antiquity furniſhed us, 'that

* Tot nos præceptoribus, tot exemplis inſtruxit antiquitas, ut poſſit videri nulla ſorte noſcendi ætas felicior, quam noſtra, cui docendæ priores elaboraverunt. Ante omnia ſufficit ad exhortationem ſtudiorum, non cadere in rerum naturam, ut quicquid non eſt factum, ne fieri quidem poſſit: cum omnia quæ magna ſunt atque admirabilia, tempus aliquod quo primum efficerentur habuerint. Quantum enim poeſis ab Homero & Virgilio, tantum faſtigium accepit eloquentia a Demoſthene & Cicerone. Denique quicquid eſt optimum antea non fuerat. Verum etiam ſi quis ſumma deſperet (quod cur faciat, cui ingenium, valetudo, facultas, præceptor, non deerunt?) tamen eſt (ut Cicero ait) pulchrum in ſecundis tertiiſque conſiſtere.

Adde quod magnos modica quoque eloquentia parit fructus, ac ſi quis hæc ſtudia utilitate ſola metiatur, pene illi perfectæ par eſt. Neque erat difficile, vel veteribus, vel novis exemplis palam facere, non aliunde majores honores, opes, amicitias, laudem præſentem, futuram, hominibus contigiſſe, ſi tamen dignum literis eſſet,

'that no age could ſeem luckier in the lot of it's 'nativity than our own; for the inſtruction of 'which all the preceding have laboured.

'Above all we have a ſufficient incentive to 'perſevere in our ſtudies, when we conſider, that 'to ſay, becauſe a thing has not yet been effect-'ed, therefore it can not be done, is a contra-'diction in nature; ſince there was a certain pe-'riod of time when every thing that was great 'and admirable begun to be produced. For juſt 'as much as poetry was perfected by Homer and 'Virgil, in the ſame high proportion was elo-'quence improved by Demoſthenes and Cicero. 'In ſhort, there was a time, when whatever is 'excellent had no exiſtence. But ſhould even a 'man deſpair of the higheſt attainments (and 'why he ſhould do ſo, who neither wants ge-'nius, nor health, nor opportunity, nor a ma-'ſter, no reaſon can be aſſigned) it is ſtill, as 'Cicero ſays, an honour to rank in the ſecond 'and third degrees.

aſſet, ab opere pulcherrimo, cujus tractatus atque ipſa poſſeſſio pleniſſimam ſtudiis gratiam refert, hanc minorem exigere mercedem, more eorum qui a ſe non virtutes, ſed voluptatem quæ ſit a virtutibus peti dicunt. Ipſam igitur orandi majeſtatem, qua nihil dii immortales melius homini dederunt, et quâ remotâ, muta ſunt omnia, & luce preſenti, & memoriâ poſteritatis carent, toto animo petamus nitamurque ſemper ad optima: qeod facientes, aut evademus in ſummum, aut certe multos infrà nos videmus. Lib. xii. cap. 11.

'Add

'Add to this, that even a moderate ſhare of 'eloquence produces great advantages; and, if 'one meaſures theſe ſtudies merely by the profit, 'is almoſt on a par with the perfection of oratory. 'Nor would it be a difficult taſk to prove, ei-'ther by antient or modern examples, that there 'is no fource from which men derive greater 'honours, eſtates, connections, and preſent as 'as well as future fame; if the dignity of eru-'dition would allow us to exact this ſmaller re-'compence from a glorious ſtudy, the mere ex-'erciſe and enjoyment of which moſt amply re-'wards our application; like thoſe who make no 'ſcruple of declaring, that not virtue, but the 'pleaſure which redounds from it, is the object of 'their purſuit. Let it therefore be our whole 'ambition to come at the true majeſty of elo-'quence, than which the immortal gods have 'beſtowed nothing better on men; without 'which all things become ſpeechleſs, and cut off 'from the notice of the preſent age, as well as 'the knowlege of poſterity. In order to compaſs 'this, let us always keep the beſt models in our 'eye; by doing which, we ſhall either arrive at 'the ſummit, or at leaſt ſee many below us.'

END of the SECOND BOOK.

BRI-

BRITISH

EDUCATION, &c.

BOOK III. CHAP. I.

Of the liberal arts, and their ſource.

THERE is no queſtion which has in all ages puzzled the curious enquirers more, than when it has been aſked, what the reaſon could be, that the liberal arts have in certain countries, at particular æras, made a rapid progreſs towards perfection, flouriſhed together for a ſhort ſpace of time (not ſo long as the life of a man) then either gradually fallen to decay, or periſhed ſuddenly, nor ever raiſed their heads again in thoſe countries, in ſpite of the utmoſt endeavours uſed to revive them? I ſhall ſet down this queſtion as ſtated at large by Velleius Paterculus.

culus. ‘ † Who can ſufficiently admire that the ‘ moſt eminent wits of every profeſſion ſhould ‘ have

† Quis enim abunde mirari poteſt, eminentiſſima cujuſque profeſſionis ingenia, in eandem formam, & in idem artati temporis congruens ſpatium; & quemadmodum clauſa capſa, alioque ſepto diverſi generis animalia, nihilo minus ſeparata alienis, in unum quæque corpus congregantur, ita cujuſque clari operis capacia ingenia in ſimilitudinem & temporum & profectuum ſemetipſa ab aliis ſeparaverunt? Una, neque multorum annorum ſpatio diviſa, ætas, per divini ſpiritus viros, Æſchylum, Sophoclem, Euripidem, illuſtravit tragœdias: una priſcam illam & veterem ſub Cratino, Ariſtophane, & Eupolide comœdiam; ac novam comicam Menandrus, æqualeſque ejus ætatis magis quam operis, Philemon ac Diphilus, & invenere intra pauciſſimos annos, neque imitanda reliquere. Philoſophorum quoque ingenia, Socratico ore defluentia, omnium, quos paullo ante enumeravimus, quanto poſt Platonis Ariſtoteliſque mortem floruere ſpatio? Quid ante Iſocratem, quid poſt ejus auditores, eorumque diſcipulos, clarum in oratoribus fuit? Adeo quidem artatum anguſtiis temporum, ut nemo memoria dignus, alter ab altero videri nequiverint? Neque hoc in Græcis quam in Romanis evenit magis. Nam niſi aſpera ac rudia repetas, & inventi laudanda nomine, in Accio circaque eum Romana tragœdia eſt; dulceſque Latini leporis facetiæ per Cæcilium, Terentiumque, & Afranium ſub pari ætate nituerunt. Hiſtoricos (ut et Livium quoque priorum ætati adſtruas) præter Catonem, & quoſdam veteres & obſcuros, minus LXXX annis circumdatum ævum tulit, ut nec poetarum in antiquius citeriuſque proceſſit ubertas. At oratio, ac vis forenſis, perfectumque proſæ eloquentiæ decus, ut idem ſeparetur Cato (pace P. Craſſi, Scipioniſque, & Lælii, & Gracchorum, & Fannii, & Ser. Galbæ

'have been crowded into their proper claſs, and 'nearly within the ſame limits of time? As ani-'mals of a different kind, when ſhut up in a 'pen, or any incloſed ground, do nevertheleſs, 'quitting thoſe of a diſtinct ſpecies, herd together 'each in a particular body; juſt ſo men, whoſe 'genius qualified them for the nobleſt productions, have ſeparated themſelves from the reſt, 'in a manner which agrees both as to the circumſtances of times and improvements. Thus one 'æra, and that too circumſcribed within the ſpace 'of not many years, by means of thoſe divine 'writers, Æſchylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, 'brought tragedy to perfection. Thus under 'Cratinus, Ariſtophanes, and Eupolis, did another æra finiſh the old comedy: and thus 'within the compaſs of a very few years did 'Menander and his cotemporaries, rather than 'equals, Philemon and Diphilus, invent the new; 'leaving behind them performances above all 'imitation. How ſhort a time did the philoſophic 'wits, who derived their original from Socrates, 'continue to flouriſh after the death of Plato and 'Ariſtotle? Who before Iſocrates, who after his 'hearers and their ſcholars, diſtinguiſhed himſelf

Galbæ dixerim) ita univerſa ſub principe operis ſui erupit Tullio, ut delectari ante eum pauciſſimis, mirari vero neminem poſſis, niſi aut ab illo viſum, aut qui illum viderit. Hoc idem eveniſſe grammaticis, plaſtis, pictoribus, ſculptoribus, quiſquis temporum inſtiterit notis, reperiet; & eminentia cujuſque operis artiſſimis temporum claſtris circumdata.

'as an orator? So contracted was the æra or ſpace
'of time, that no two deſerve to be mentioned,
'who might not have ſeen one another. Nor
'was this leſs the caſe among the Romans than
'among the Greeks: ſince, unleſs we go back to
'ſome rough and rude performances, which have
'nothing but the honour of the invention to
'plead; in Accius and his cotemporary writers
'is the Roman tragedy to be found. Much
'about the ſame time did the charming elegan-
'cies of the Roman wit receive their poliſh from
'Cæcilius, Terentius, and Afranius. With re-
'gard to our hiſtorians (even if we annex Livy
'to the earlier claſs of them) an æra conſiſting of
'leſs than eighty years produced them all, except
'Cato, and ſome antient and obſcure ones: nei-
'ther did the rich vein of our poets reach higher
'or lower. But oratory, the power of pleading,
'and the glorious perfection of proſe eloquence,
'if we ſtill except the ſame Cato (with the leave
'of Publius Craſſus, of Scipio, of Lælius, of the
'Gracchi, of Fannius, and of Servius Galba be
'it ſpoken) did all ſo compleatly burſt out in the
'prince of his profeſſion, Tully, that of thoſe
'who went before him, very few can give you
'delight; but you certainly can admire none who
'was not either ſeen by him or ſaw him. Who-
'ever diligently traces the characters of time
'will find that the ſame thing has happened to
'grammarians, ſtatuaries, painters, and ſculptors;
'and that the meridian of every art has been of
'an extreme ſhort duration.—Whilſt therefore

'I am

'I am continually ſearching after the cauſes why 'this and the preceding ages have united men of 'the like genius in the ſame courſe of ſtudy and 'improvement; I find none upon the truth of 'which I can abſolutely depend.' *

Thus after having eſtabliſhed the fact, he acknowleges that he does not know how to account for it by any reaſons which appear to him ſatisfactory. Nor indeed has this problem, notwithſtanding the numberleſs attempts towards it, as yet met with a proper ſolution. Of all the writers upon this ſubject, the abbé Du Bos ſeems to have laboured the point the moſt, as he has employed the greateſt part of the ſecond volume of his critical reflections profeſſedly upon that head. But whoever examines what he has ſaid, with attention, will find that he has ſhewn more fancy than judgement in his manner of diſcuſſing this point, and that his arguments are rather ingenious, than concluſive. He himſelf indeed has offered them with great modeſty, and only as conjectures; for in the introduction he ſays, 'Whilſt I have been meditating on this ſubject, 'a great variety of ideas have frequently pre-'ſented themſelves to my mind, which I look 'upon rather as ſimple glimmerings, than real 'lights. ... However, there is a ſufficient air

* Hujus ergo præcedentiſque ſeculi ingeniorum ſimilitudines congregantis, & in ſtudium par, & in emolumentum, cauſas cum ſemper requiro, nunquam reperio quas eſſe veras confidam. Vell. Patercul. lib. 1.

'of

'of probability in theſe ideas, to think them wor-
'thy of entertaining my reader.'

Suppoſe therefore an explanation of this phæ-nomenon ſhould be attempted by a new hypo-theſis, not founded on ſpeculation merely, but facts; not ſupported by ſpecious arguments drawn from opinions and notions which are incapable of proof, but from the reaſon and nature of things. Suppoſe it be ſhewn that the liberal arts, what-ever different courſes they might afterwards take, all had their riſe from one common fountain: it will no longer be a matter of wonder that their ſtreams ſhould be copious, and clear, in propor-tion to the exuberance, and purity, of their ſource; nor that they ſhould diminiſh or diſap-pear as that was exhauſted or dried up. In ſhort, let us only ſuppoſe that oratory was the fountain from which alone the liberal arts flowed, and all the ſeeming difficulties and intricacies of this que-ſtion will be at once ſolved and explained. Let us ſee, in the firſt place, how far this hypotheſis can be ſupported by facts; in the next, by reaſon, and the nature of things. Firſt, as to facts: the proof of the following propoſitions will be ſuffi-cient to eſtabliſh it with reſpect to them.

'That the liberal arts never flouriſhed, or
'arrived at perfection in any country, where the
'ſtudy and practice of oratory was neglected.

'That in thoſe countries, where the liberal
'arts arrived at their higheſt pitch of glory, there
'were no traces of them, previous to the ſtudy
'of oratory.'

'That

'That the liberal arts always followed oratory 'in their progreſs towards perfection; arrived at 'their ſummit ſoon after that did; declined as 'that declined; and when that was baniſhed, 'wholly diſappeared.'

CHAP. II.

That the liberal arts never flouriſhed, or arrived at perfection in any country, however otherwiſe remarkable for knowlege and ingenuity, where the ſtudy and practice of oratory was neglected.

ALL who are converſant in antient hiſtory muſt know, that amidſt the various accounts tranſmitted of ſeveral flouriſhing nations, remarkable for wiſdom, knowlege, and learning, diſtinguiſhed for the cultivation of all the uſeful ſciences of life, there are no traces appear of their having brought the politer arts to any perfection: Such as the Aſſyrians, Perſians, Chaldeans, Carthaginians, and many more. Nay even in Ægypt and Phœnicia, from which countries the Greeks are allowed to have borrowed all their knowlege and ſkill in other ſciences, they are known to have been ever in a low and rude ſtate. The few monuments that remained have inconteſtably proved this fact, as there were none, which ſhewed marks of any taſte, but ſuch as were known to be the works of Grecian artiſts. It is an undoubted truth, that both the Ægyptians and Perſians, when they ſet about any great work,

work, were obliged to ſend to Greece for their painters and ſculptors. We may find in many other countries a number of eminent names of great commanders, able lawgivers, wiſe philoſophers, ſkilled in the deepeſt myſteries of ſcience: but it is in the annals of Greece and Rome alone, that we muſt look for a liſt of poets, hiſtorians, painters, ſculptors, and muſicians. Nor has all antiquity furniſhed us with a ſingle inſtance of any excellent performance in any of thoſe arts, which was not the production of ſome genius either born or bred in one of thoſe two countries. And here let it be remembered, that it was in thoſe two countries alone that oratory was ever ſtudied and practiſed as an art.

CHAP. III.

That in thoſe countries where the liberal arts arrived at their higheſt pitch of glory, there were no traces of them, previous to the ſtudy of oratory.

IN Greece, where all theſe arts ſeem to have had their firſt birth, at leaſt in any maturity, we can not trace any memorials of them previous to the inſtitution of oratory. The firſt works of any maſter, which have been handed down to us, were thoſe of Homer; and as Cicero has juſtly obſerved, it is apparent from thoſe very works that eloquence had been in high repute long before his time. So that tho' we can not fix

the

the preciſe date of the firſt riſe of oratory amongſt them, yet we have a moral certainty that it preceded that of the other liberal arts. In Rome we can not be at a loſs to fix the exact æra of both. We know that, previous to the introduction of the ſtudy of eloquence, which happened a little before the time of Scipio and Lælius, their taſte for poetry, painting, muſic, &c. was as rude and barbarous as in the moſt uncultivated nations; nor did there ever ariſe amongſt them, before that period, one maſter of eminence in any of thoſe arts, nor was there produced one compoſition in any kind worthy to be preſerved and tranſmitted to poſterity. Tho' it is well known, that in leſs than fourſcore years after the inſtitution of oratory amongſt them, all thoſe arts, together with eloquence, gradually aroſe to their higheſt ſummit; inſomuch that Rome might almoſt vie even with Greece, in point of the number of excellent artiſts, as well as in the perfection of their ſeveral kinds of works.

CHAP. IV.

That the liberal arts always followed oratory in their progreſs towards perfection; arrived at their ſummit ſoon after that did; declined as that declined; and, when that was baniſhed, wholly diſappeared.

IT was in the age of Pericles and Demoſthenes that oratory was brought to it's higheſt pitch in Greece; and we find that all the great maſters in

in the ſeveral arts, whoſe works have gained to them immortal fame, and have ever ſince been the admiration of the world, were their cotemporaries. What an amazing number of poets and other writers ſtarted up and flouriſhed together during that ſmall ſpace? Æſchylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, in tragedy: Ariſtophanes, Eupolis, Cratinus, and Menander, in comedy: Herodotus, Thucydides, Iſocrates, Xenophon, Plato, and Ariſtotle, in proſe: beſides many others of great name, whoſe works have unfornately periſhed. The ſame ſpace of time produced Zeuxis, Apelles, Aglaophon, and many more in the art of painting: Phidias, Praxiteles, Lyſippus, Myro, Polycletus, in ſtatuary and ſculpture. Then alſo aroſe all her great muſicians, whoſe names only are handed down to us, as their works have periſhed. But with the life of Demoſthenes ended the liberties of Greece; oratory became mute, and the arts vaniſhed.

Nothing can ſerve more ſtrongly to illuſtrate and prove the point propoſed, than to obſerve the amazing ſimilarity which there was between the fate of the arts in Rome, and in Greece. It was in the time of Hortenſius and * Cicero that oratory reached it's ſummit; and the ſame æra gave birth to all the admired artiſts of Rome. During that period flouriſhed, or were trained up,

* Quicquid Romana facundia habet, quod inſolenti Græciæ aut opponat, aut præferat, circum Ciceronem effloruit. Omnia ingenia quæ lucem ſtudiis noſtris attulerunt tunc nata ſunt. In deterius deinde quotidie data res eſt. M. Ann. Senec. contro. l. i.

all their great poets; Lucretius, Virgil, Horace, Propertius, Catullus, Tibullus, Ovid, Phædrus, Cornelius Gallus, and many more, equally admired in thoſe times, tho' their works did not happen to eſcape the devaſtations of barbarians; ſuch as Fundanius, Pollio, and Varius, whoſe merits we can not doubt of, when celebrated by the candid and judicious Horace. At that time aroſe Julius Cæſar, Livy, Salluſt, &c. Then it was that Rome produced her Vitruvius, and all her eminent painters and ſculptors. But after that, in Rome, as in Greece, with the loſs of liberty oratory declined, the arts drooped together with eloquence, and gradually ſunk away. It may be here objected, that it was in the reign of Auguſtus, after the form of government had been changed, that the arts appeared in their higheſt luſtre at Rome. But in anſwer to this let it be obſerved, that the artiſts themſelves were all bred up during the moſt remarkable period of the republic whoſe laſt blaze was it's brighteſt: at a time when all the faculties of the greateſt minds were exerted to the utmoſt in defence of expiring liberty: when a Cato or a Brutus found proper opportunities to diſplay that ſuperior magnanimity, which has ever ſince rendered them objects of admiration to the whole world: when Cicero found ſubjects adequate to his mighty talents, and when oratory ſhone out from it's full meridian, and the ſtudy of eloquence was univerſal. As there could not poſſibly have been a more happy juncture for the raiſing and cultivation of early

early genius, ſo the ſeaſon that ſucceeded was of all others the beſt fitted to make it flouriſh and produce fruit. The long and peaceful reign of Auguſtus, his great liberality, and nice diſcernment, together with that of his miniſter, in rewarding merit, muſt have made every artiſt exert his talents to the utmoſt. But tho' this due encouragement produced ſuch wonders in the works of thoſe who had been already formed, yet it had not power to raiſe any new ones. Nor was there afterwards a ſingle inſtance of any maſterly performance, which was the work of a perſon born and bred up during his reign, or thoſe of his ſucceſſors; the beſt of them being only copies of thoſe great originals: A plain and demonſtrative proof, that the fountain which nurſed and invigorated thoſe great geniuſes was dried up. If a concurrence of moral cauſes could have been able to have raiſed the arts from their ſeeds to maturity, there never had been a period which promiſed ſo plentiful a crop. And tho' it may be ſaid, that the tempeſtuous weather during the cruel and bloody reigns of Nero and ſome of his ſucceſſors might for a time have blighted and ſtopped their growth, yet what cauſe can be aſſigned that they did not revive and flouriſh under the ſettled calm, warm ſunſhine, and genial ſkies, of five ſuch ſucceſſive reigns as thoſe of Nerva, Trajan, Adrian, Antoninus Pius, and Marcus Aurelius?

When we conſider that, previous to the perfection of orators in Greece, there was no inſtance of any excellent performance in any of the

liberal arts, the works of Homer alone excepted; and that in Rome there was not one example: that, after the abolition of oratory in both countries, there never was any thing maſterly produced in either: when we reflect, that the liberal arts never roſe to any height in any country of the globe where oratory was not ſtudied and practiſed; and that, in thoſe countries where oratory was cultivated, they grew and flouriſhed, declined and periſhed as that did; we can not but conclude that there muſt be a near and intimate connexion between them, and that the one has a neceſſary dependence on the other.

'From the above ſtate of the caſe one of the two following concluſions muſt evidently be deduced; either, 'that the perfection of oratory was the 'cauſe of the perfection of the liberal arts; or, 'that the perfection of the liberal arts was the 'cauſe of the perfection of oratory.' The former opinion ſeems to be ſupported by fact, as it has been clearly ſhewn that the riſe of oratory was always previous to that of the arts: let us now ſee how it can be maintained and confirmed from the reaſon and nature of things. In order to do this, I ſhall firſt endeavour to ſhew, that this opinion is founded upon the higheſt degree of probability, by making it appear that it was much more eaſy for oratory, and by means more natural, to raiſe and ſupport the liberal arts, than that the liberal arts ſhould have power to raiſe and ſupport oratory. In the ſecond place I ſhall endeavour to eſtabliſh it upon certain proof, that

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it is almoſt impoſſible that thoſe arts ſhould arrive at perfection without the aid and aſſiſtance of oratory.

CHAP. V.

That it is much more probable that oratory raiſed and ſupported the liberal arts, than that the liberal arts raiſed and ſupported oratory.

EVERY one, who at all conſiders the point, muſt at once ſee, that in oratory alone are contained the principles of all other arts; and that to form a compleat orator the talents of a poet, painter, and muſician, are abſolutely neceſſary: ſo that the perfection of that one art would of courſe afford ſupplies to the others, and bring them to maturity. Whereas, on a contrary principle, oratory muſt wait for it's perfection, 'till each of the other arts had reached theirs, and flouriſhed all together: a circumſtance not very likely to happen, as they have by no means ſo near a connection with each other (tho' ſomewhat allied) that the progreſs of the one ſhould of courſe introduce that of the other. *Fruſtra fit per plura quod fieri poteſt per pauciora*, is an undoubted axiom. And ſurely it is more rational to account for different effects from the energy of one cauſe, if they may be allowed naturally to flow from it, than to attribute one effect to the united power of various cauſes, which have no neceſſary union amongſt themſelves.

The variety of colours is much more eaſily accounted for, by ſuppoſing that they reſide in the rays of light (which has indeed been proved) than in the ſeveral objects. And this method of reaſoning muſt ever be allowed to be the moſt probable, when not contradicted by facts. But there is alſo another argument to be drawn in ſupport of this opinion from the very nature of theſe arts, and the manner in which they operate, that will amount to ſomething equivalent to proof. All arts are accompliſhed and ended either in a work, or an energy. A work is that whoſe parts are co-exiſtent, and the perfection of whoſe eſſence depends upon their remaining in the ſame ſtate. An energy is that whoſe parts exiſt only in ſucceſſion, and which hath it's very being in tranſition. Thus a ſtatue and a picture are works, as are alſo a poem and a muſical compoſition, when reduced to writing and notes, as their parts in that caſe become co-exiſtent and fixed. But dancing, playing on any inſtrument, and ſpeaking or reciting, are only energies. Hence it will follow, when the production of any art is an energy, that the perfection of the art can be only perceived during that energy, and muſt alſo of neceſſity be co-eval with the artiſt. Thus the delicate touches and maſterly hand of a muſical performer can be only perceived during the action of his playing, muſt end when that ceaſes, and neceſſarily finiſh with his life. Thus alſo the animated looks, enforcing geſture, and expreſſive tones of the orator, can be known only to his immediate

immediate ſpectators and hearers; and, except ſuch part of them as is impreſſed on the memories of thoſe, muſt neceſſarily periſh with himſelf. But the caſe is quite otherwiſe in regard to works, the perfection of which is not viſible during the energy, but only after it. It is not 'till the painter, the ſtatuary, and the poet, have put their laſt hand to their pieces, that they are ſaid to be finiſhed, or their full beauty perceived. After that, they have no connection with the fate of the artiſt, but may remain to perpetuity when he himſelf is no more. When this conſideration has had it's due weight, upon a ſuppoſition that the liberal arts borrowed their aids and ſupplies from oratory, we ſhall no longer be at a loſs for a reaſon why there are no more excellent artiſts to be found in any of thoſe, when there were no longer any good orators ſubſiſting. But on the contrary ſuppoſition, that oratory drew it's ſupplies from the liberal arts, there can be no reaſon aſſigned why many excellent orators might not at any time have ariſen, ſince the compoſitions, and works, of the ſeveral artiſts ſtill remained in equal perfection, and conſequently equally capable of affording them all proper lights and aſſiſtance. But why ſhould we ſuppoſe that theſe ſeveral works ſhould be able to produce great maſters in a diſtinct art, when they were not capable of raiſing any in their own ſeveral kinds? It would be more natural to think that a number of excellent compoſitions in poetry, muſic, and painting, ſhould ſerve as models to form good poets, maſters

of muſic, and painters, each being wholly employed in the ſtudy and practice of his own art, than that finiſhed orators ſhould be produced from the difficult and laborious ſtudy of all three; and yet we find that they were far from being equal even to this. Seneca, who wrote in the reign immediately ſucceeding that of Auguſtus, complains heavily of the great depravity of taſte, and viſible decay of all the arts: and Quinctilian, ſixty years after the deceaſe of that prince, wrote an expreſs treatiſe on the cauſes of the decay of Roman eloquence. He has alſo ſhewn us in many places, that the other arts were equally in a low ſtate. Since therefore we find it indubitably proved that the arts always roſe, flouriſhed, and declined with oratory, why we may not conclude with confidence, that it was from oratory alone that they drew their ſupplies? But as it may be ſaid that all which has been advanced upon this ſubject will at moſt only amount to a ſtrong preſumptive proof, I ſhall now endeavour to ſhew, that it is almoſt impoſſible for the liberal arts to reach perfection, or flouriſh to any great degree, without the aid of oratory, and the ſupplies which they draw from thence. In order to do this it will be neceſſary to trace the principles upon which the perfection of thoſe arts is founded. Let us therefore take a ſurvey of poetry, muſic, and painting, with this view; ſince whatever relates to ſculpture and ſtatuary will come under the laſt head.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

Of Poetry, Muſic, and Painting, and their Source.

THESE arts are all founded upon one common principle, which is imitation. They differ from each other only in the ſubjects which they are ſeverally capable of imitating, and in the inſtruments, or *media*, made uſe of to diſplay that power. Painting, for inſtance, can imitate only thro' the *media* of figure and colour, and is therefore confined to ſuch ſubjects as are peculiarly characteriſed by thoſe. Muſic, for the ſame reaſon, is limited to ſuch only as depend upon motion and ſound: whilſt poetry, working by the medium of words, which by compact ſtand for ſymbols of all our ideas, can imitate as far as language can expreſs; and that in a manner includes all things.

As the fundamental point in all theſe arts is imitation, it is evident that, without that, they can have no merit, or rather indeed can not ſubſiſt. But the moſt perfect imitation in the world is not of itſelf ſufficient to ſtamp a value upon a work, which muſt ever be conſidered with relation to the ſubject or thing imitated, and be rated in proportion to the merit of that. For tho' the chief object of the artiſt himſelf be imitation, and he has certainly arrived at perfection in every work, where he has been able to produce an exact reſemblance, yet the world, who are to rate the

merit of the piece, will not confine themſelves merely to the ſkill of the artiſt, but will take into the value circumſtances of delight and profit, which ariſe from qualities inherent in the original ſubject. Hence it is plain, that in all theſe arts there is abſolute and relative perfection. The abſolute depends upon the exact ſimilitude of the copy to the original, of whatever kind it be; the relative upon the choice of the ſubject, as well as accurate reſemblance. As the laſt is that which aſcertains the value of works, it is therefore chiefly to be attended to by all artiſts.

The great ends of all theſe arts being the ſame with thoſe of oratory, viz. 'to delight, to move, 'and to inſtruct,' (under which laſt head I include every thing which tends to better the heart as well as to improve the underſtanding) the points ſhould be conſtantly kept in view both in the choice of ſubjects, and in the manner of handling them. Whence it muſt follow, that all ſubjects for imitation taken from human nature, and all means to diſplay them borrowed from that, muſt with mankind obtain a preference, and have a ſtronger influence than from the whole univerſe beſides. Nature itſelf has implanted in us a particular attraction to our own ſpecies, which is viſible in all animals; and endued the heart with a kind of inſtructive ſenſibility to certain ſounds and tones, as well as looks and geſtures, which have a natural expreſſion in them, independent of words, and which may be conſidered as the univerſal language of the paſſions, equally underſtood by all the different

ferent nations of the earth. Nothing therefore can delight or move the heart of man ſo much as a lively repreſentation of the actions and ſufferings of others, ariſing from qualities to which he finds ſomething congenial in himſelf. And what inſtruction can be of ſuch advantage to him, as that which improves him in the knowlege of human nature, the uſe whereof he muſt daily and hourly experience in every action of his life?

We find that by common conſent mankind have agreed to rate the value of works by this ſtandard. Thus the epic and dramatic poetry have obtained the firſt place in preference to the lyric, epigrammatic, and all writings of wit and fancy. Thus the hiſtory painter has an allowed ſuperiority over thoſe who draw landſcapes, animals flowers, and the whole tribe of inanimate beings. In muſic alſo they who make uſe of that art as an adjunct to poetry, and by that means make it capable of moving the paſſions, and of impreſſing ſentiments more ſtrongly on the mind, are preferred to thoſe whoſe compoſitions only ſerve to pleaſe the ear, or charm the fancy. In this alſo the human voice is confeſſedly pre-eminent over all muſical inſtruments, whoſe power of moving and pleaſing the heart and ear, is in proportion to their near reſemblance to that.

We find alſo, that amongſt the maſters in the ſeveral imitative arts, who chuſe human nature for their object, there is a diſtinction of rank in proportion to the dignity and importance of their ſubjects. Thus the writer of epic poetry, who

relates

relates the actions of kings and heroes, and diſplays all the more elevated and ſublime qualities of the human mind, together with the more exalted and noble paſſions, is placed at a great diſtance above the writers of paſtorals and elegies. For the ſame reaſon the tragic poet is prefered to the comic. Thus the painter of famous and remarkable hiſtorical actions is in higher eſtimation, than he who is only employed about portraits, or converſation pieces in common life. And thus the compoſers of operas, maſques, oratorios, &c. are of an higher order, than they who only ſet ſingle ſongs, cantatas, or dialogues, to muſic. This being premiſed, let us now examine the points which are neceſſary to enable each artiſt in his ſeveral way to arrive at the higheſt degree of perfection his art is capable, and to be ranked in the foremoſt claſs.

To the completion of an artiſt four things are chiefly neceſſary, genius, application, proper ſubjects, and ſuitable inſtruments to work with. Suppoſing therefore an equality as to the two firſt requiſites in perſons born in different countries or ages, let us ſee how far their works will be affected, and riſe up to, or fall ſhort of perfection, in proportion to their opportunities of being ſupplied with the latter.

All imitation neceſſarily ſuppoſes a ſubject, or thing imitated, and muſt therefore be ever conſidered with relation to that; otherwiſe it changes it's nature, and loſes it's very eſſence.

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The perfection of imitation conſiſts in the exact- of ſimilitude to the thing imitated. Whence ently follows that it muſt partake of all the d bad qualities of it's ſubject; that it muſt ful, or deformed, give pleaſure, or diſ- portion as that would.

nſcripts are formed from impreſſions n the imagination, the ſtronger thoſe im- reſſions are, the more lively and ſimilar will the tranſcripts be. Now nothing contributes ſo much to the ſtrength of impreſſions as the frequent and reiterated action of the objects upon the ſenſes, thro' which they are ſtamped on the imagination, and ſink deeper at every new ſtroke. As their ſimilitude depends much upon this, ſo the beauty of their form, and the ſymmetry of their parts in the copies, muſt ever be determined by thoſe qualities in the originals. Whence we muſt conclude, that all ſuch artiſts (ſuppoſing an equality of genius and application) as have the moſt frequent opportunities of ſeeing and examining the beſt and moſt perfect ſubjects, will neceſſarily produce works of the ſtrongeſt reſemblance, and greateſt excellence.

Here it is to be obſerved, that I ſpeak all along of real artiſts, whoſe works are an immediate tranſcript from nature, and are therefore dignified with the name of originals, in contradiſtinction to the mechanical labours of copyiſts, who content themſelves with a ſervile imitation of the manner of thoſe maſters; and whoſe productions, as they do not proceed from a warm imagination ſtrongly impreſſed

impreſſed by the energetic power of nature, but from a cold obſervation of artificial rules; ſo, tho' they may be poſſeſſed even of a ſcrupulous ſimilarity, and raiſe analogous ideas, yet they are deprived of all power of moving and affecting. The impreſſions made by them laſt no longer than whilſt they are ſeen, in the ſame manner as a man views his own image exactly diſplayed in a mirror, *but when he goeth away, ſtraightway forgetteth what manner of man he is.*

After the ſubjects, the next things which come to be conſidered are the inſtruments, or media, by means whereof the images and ideas which are in the brain of the artiſt are ſubmitted to the ſenſes of others; and without which he can do nothing. Here it muſt at once be evident, that the ſkill of the artiſt muſt appear in a greater or leſs degree in proportion to the degrees of perfection in his inſtruments, and aptitude to their end. For whatever ideas he may have himſelf, he can not communicate any beyond what is in the power of thoſe inſtruments to ſhew. Thus in poetry, a writer can not compoſe harmonious verſes in a language of which the words have a diſcordant and diſagreeable ſound: the painter who has but a few colours muſt be confined only to ſuch objects as they are capable of repreſenting: and the muſician muſt be reſtrained in his compoſitions to ſuch notes as are within the compaſs of his inſtrument. Hence it will follow, that a poet who writes in a language well adapted to poetical numbers muſt have an advantage over one who has

has a diſſonant and unpleaſing tongue to ſtruggle with: that a painter who has the art of blending colours, ſo as to form as great a variety as are to be found in the works of nature, has a much larger field to diſplay his talents in, than he who is confined to a few: and that the muſical compoſer may ſhew infinite powers in his art by means of inſtruments of proper force and compaſs, which can not be at all diſplayed by one whoſe inſtruments are poor and confined.

Let us now apply theſe rules to the ſeveral imitative arts; from which it will appear, that the maſters in thoſe, whoſe chief buſineſs it is to give a lively and beautiful repreſentation of human nature, in it's moſt exalted and graceful point of view, muſt of neceſſity have had the higheſt advantage, by means of living in thoſe countries, and in thoſe periods of time, when oratory was at it's height, over all other artiſts in the world, of every other age and country. And we ſhall ſee the reaſon why it is almoſt impoſſible that perfect tranſcripts of that kind could have been produced at any other juncture, thro' the want of proper ſubjects, or ſuitable inſtruments.

And firſt as to poetry. The inſtrument of the poets is language, and their works muſt be proportionably perfect, or defective, as that is. In regard to this point, we have already ſhewn, both from fact and the reaſon of things, that the ſtudy and practice of oratory alone could bring language to perfection. It was to the orators therefore that the poets of all denominations were obliged for the

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uſe and improvement of an inſtrument perfectly adapted to all their ſeveral purpoſes; as well as for inſtructions in the art of managing it with eaſe and dexterity. But the epic and tragic writers, in whoſe works the dignity of human nature was to be diſplayed, as well as all the more exalted paſſions and affections, muſt have been chiefly indebted to them for the principal excellence of their art. Their great ends are, *to move, to delight, to inſtruct*? and from whom could they learn the power of all this ſo effectually as from the orator, who muſt ſo far fail of his point, as he falls ſhort in any of thoſe ends, and whoſe conſtant practice pointed out the means by which thoſe were to be attained? Where could they have ſuch opportunities of drawing the paſſions from the life, as in thoſe aſſemblies where they were perpetually to be ſeen both in their cauſes and effects? From what ſchool could they learn the art of giving ſuitable ſentiments, proper diction, and becoming deportment to their exalted characters, which they could have but few opportunities of obſerving in life, ſo well as that of oratory, where they might ſee men of the moſt elevated genius diſplaying all the higheſt faculties of the mind upon the moſt important ſubjects? Where they had conſtant models before them of the moſt animated nature, under the guidance of the beſt regulated art? It is eaſy to ſee how much all writers in proſe, whether of hiſtory, or any thing elſe relative to human affairs, muſt have been indebted to that for the ornamental parts of their works, as this is viſible

ſible enough in the many excellent orations to be found in the antient writers.

Secondly, as to muſic. The great end and uſe of muſic is to move, and by ſtirring the paſſions to give delight. For conſidered as a mere ſenſual gratification, it is of no ſort of benefit, and it's effect is to the laſt degree tranſient. It was to anſwer the former purpoſe, that the antients employed their whole ſkill in that art. They conſidered it therefore chiefly as an aſſiſtant to poetry, and in the conſtruction of their inſtruments they had that point principally in view. As an adjunct to poetry, it's great force muſt depend upon expreſſion: and expreſſion muſt be borrowed from the various ſounds and tones which nature has annexed to the various paſſions; but ſtill under the regulation of art as to the proper proportions and degrees ſuited to the occaſion. The human voice, or the inſtruments which approached neareſt to it, were of courſe the moſt capable of producing this effect. From whom therefore could the muſical compoſer acquire ſuch ſkill in this reſpect as from the orator, to whom it was abſolutely neceſſary that he ſhould be able to expreſs all the different paſſions in their natural and ſuitable tones and ſounds? And how finely and properly muſt theſe have come prepared to the compoſer, when heard from the tuneful and well-modulated voice of a finiſhed ſpeaker? It was from this example that the muſician learned the complete management of his art, as deſcribed by Quinctilian. *Namque & voce & modulatione gran-*

dia

dia elate, jucunda dulciter, moderata leniter canit, totâque arte conſentit cum eorum quæ dicuntur affectibus. With ſuch aids and ſuch ſubjects for imitation, we need no longer wonder at the amazing effects which are recorded to have been produced by antient muſic, nor the extraordinary power which it had over the paſſions: a power equal (if we may believe the concurrent teſtimony of many hiſtorians, and other writers) to the fancied deſcription of it in Dryden's ode. Nor ſhall we be at a loſs to account for this, when we conſider the mighty force of oratorial expreſſion alone: what then muſt it be, when conveyed to the heart with all the ſuperadded powers and charms of muſic? No perſon of ſenſibility, who has had the good fortune to hear Mrs Cibber ſing in the oratorio of the Meſſiah, will find it very difficult to give credit to accounts of the moſt wonderful effects produced from ſo powerful an union. And yet it was not to any extraordinary powers of voice (whereof ſhe has but a moderate ſhare) nor to a greater degree of ſkill in muſic (wherein many of the Italians muſt be allowed to exceed her) that ſhe owed her excellence, but to expreſſion only; her acknowleged ſuperiority in which could proceed from nothing but ſkill in her profeſſion. What has been ſaid may ſerve clearly to point out the reaſon why the muſic of the antients was upon the whole far ſuperior to that of the moderns, notwithſtanding it muſt be granted that our inſtruments have great advantages over theirs, and that our muſic, conſidered as a

ſingle

ſingle and diſtinct ſcience, has been carried to a much higher pitch of perfection than probably it ever was amongſt them. The chief end which the antients had in view was it's utility in ſtirring the paſſions, rouzing the affections, and giving them a proper direction. This could never effectually be accompliſhed but by making it an adjunct to poetry; and as an adjunct to poetry it muſt obtain its chief force from expreſſion, it's chief delight from melody. The completion of their whole point was therefore finiſhed in the accompliſhment of thoſe two; and this being their *ſummum*, they ſeldom turned their thoughts to conſider how far the powers of muſic might be carried as a ſeparate art. But the caſe of the moderns was quite otherwiſe. With the ſprings of oratory was alſo dried up the ſource of expreſſion in this art when uſed as an ally to poetry. As, they found it impoſſible therefore to arrive at any great degree of excellence in that reſpect, they changed their object, and employed their whole thoughts in conſidering it's ſeparate powers, and their labours in endeavouring to bring it to the higheſt degree of perfection, of which in it's own nature it was ſingly capable. With this view they applied themſelves aſſiduouſly to the improvement of the old, and the invention of new inſtruments, which might be capable of diſplaying the whole powers and variety of harmony: and their works have chiefly tended ſince to diſplay the whole powers and variety of thoſe inſtruments. In this reſpect they have perhaps gone as

great

great lengths, and accompliſhed their point as effectually, as the antients did theirs. But if to move the paſſions, and thereby to better the heart, be an end in itſelf of more uſe and importance, than merely to gratify the ear or amuſe the fancy, the antient muſic muſt ſurely be of a ſuperior rank to the modern. To be convinced of this, we need only conſider the effects which are naturally produced by the two different kinds. The beſt muſical imitation can of itſelf only excite ideas ſimilar and analogous to ſuch as are in the mind of the compoſer, and which are as evaneſcent as the ſounds which excite them: nor can it's effect be at all greater or more durable in moving the paſſions. But when it is annexed to poetry, the ideas raiſed by it are exactly the ſame, and are fixed on the memory by permanent marks: the paſſions alſo are not only rouzed and put in motion, but acquire duration by being aſſociated to the images of poetry, and are directed to proper ends by the ſentiments. Indeed the natural ſuperiority of this kind of muſic over the other can not be more fully proved than by the general preference which it has obtained amongſt us, even in it's very imperfect and defective ſtate. The inſtrumental muſic is univerſally held in lower eſtimation than the vocal, notwithſtanding that the compoſitions in the former muſt be allowed to be more perfect in their kind, and it muſt be granted that the maſters have attained their end more completely than in the latter. The imperfection of the modern vocal muſic clearly

clearly ariſes from a want of proper expreſſion: nor ſhall we have cauſe to wonder that this defect is ſo general when we conſider that, in order to be able to produce that, a compoſer ſhould completely underſtand the whole art of eloquence. For how ſhould he be able to give the proper cadence to words by means of muſical notes, or annex ſuitable ſounds expreſſive of the paſſions, who does not know how to lay the right emphaſis in reading or repeating thoſe very words, or to enforce the ſentiments by the natural tones of voice? The total and general want of ſkill in that art, has been the cauſe that the compoſers of vocal muſic have been under a neceſſity of giving up what ought to be their chief object, and of making their end the ſame with that of the inſtrumental. They conſider the human voice therefore in the light merely of an inſtrument, and employ their whole art and ſkill only in ſhewing the compaſs and various inflections of that, and content themſelves with the ſuperiority which the mere powers of the organ, together with the natural energy of it's operations upon the kindred ſenſes of the hearers, give to their works, preferable to thoſe which are diſplayed by artificial inſtruments. So that both kinds of muſic have now one common object, that of charming the ear and amuſing the fancy; and the ſuperiority of the one over the other has only reſulted from it's natural qualities and fitneſs to anſwer thoſe ends. The neceſſity brought upon the compoſer of vocal muſic of changing his object, and making

ing his end the ſame with that of the inſtrumental, may be made ſufficiently apparent from a due conſideration of the following circumſtance. Let us ſuppoſe a maſter were to ariſe, who with immenſe pains ſhould make himſelf well ſkilled in expreſſion, and in all his compoſitions ſhould conſider that as the chief point; would not all his labours be fruitleſs, unleſs he could find performers equally well ſkilled in that art with himſelf? For if the fingers were not able to enter into the ſpirit of the work, and to produce the whole force of expreſſion according to the deſign of the artiſt, the compoſition muſt fail of it's great end, that of moving the heart. When that end is miſſed, the chief excellence of the work is of courſe not perceived, and in this caſe nothing remains to be conſidered but it's other qualities, of pleaſing the ear and flattering the imagination. In theſe reſpects, as it muſt neceſſarily be much confined, and circumſcribed in narrow bounds, by the main object, when it comes to be compared with compoſitions where the full reins are given to fancy, it muſt appear infinitely inferior, and be rated accordingly. Of this we have a remarkable inſtance in the works of the greateſt muſical genius that this country has produced. Purcel, tho' not the inventor of the Engliſh muſic, yet was the great improver of it; and had it been cultivated with care ſince his time, we might perhaps claim a ſuperiority over all the moderns. He clearly ſaw that the chief object of vocal muſic ought to be expreſſion. This was therefore what he principally

cipally attended to in his compoſitions, and he carried the point much farther than could have been expected from the weak lights and aſſiſtances which he met with in thoſe times. Had he lived in the illuſtrious ages of old Greece or Rome, it is more than probable, from the immenſity of his genius, and the aids and advantages which he might have had then to improve it to the utmoſt, that he might have been ranked amongſt their foremoſt artiſts. During his life, the beauty of his works might have been perceived, and his reputation proportionably raiſed, as he had an opportunity of inſtructing the performers, *viva voce*, in the manner of ſinging them according to their true ſpirit. But ſince his death, by means of a total ignorance in the ſingers as to the article of expreſſion, they have gradually ſunk away in their eſtimation, and are now almoſt buried in oblivion. In a century or two more, unleſs a true taſte ſhould revive, they will probably be wholly obliterated, and the memorial of them remain no more upon earth. The ſame cauſe may ſerve fully to account for the total annihilation of the antient muſic, inſomuch that not the leaſt traces of it were handed down to poſterity, except the figures of their inſtruments preſerved on medals, baſſo relievos, and other pieces of ſculpture. When muſic flouriſhed in thoſe countries, the compoſers, as well as performers, were all regularly trained in the ſtudy and practice of elocution; for, as it has been before obſerved, without a knowlege of that art, they could never have

diſplayed

diſplayed excellence in their own, which depended chiefly on expreſſion. This art therefore neceſſarily ſunk with that of eloquence, and loſt all it's charms. The preſervation of the notes of a compoſition was only the preſervation of their powers as to mere ſound; but their force and beauty in point of expreſſion could never be pointed out by any viſible marks, without the aſſiſtance of a maſter's voice. The true powers therefore of ſuch marks could be as little known to poſterity, in muſical compoſitions, as the true uſe of the accents in the works of the Greek poets and orators. As therefore the great beauty of their vocal muſic was loſt, and as they had never carried their inſtrumental to any great height, nothing remained in the whole art worthy of much pains to preſerve it, and conſequently it was eaſily ſwept away and drowned in the torrent of barbariſm. Nor ought this to appear at all ſurpriſing to us when we reflect that, beſides the inſtance before mentioned of Purcel, whoſe reputation, tho' he lived ſo near our own times, is amazingly ſunk, we have examples alſo in our great old maſters, Tallis, Lawes, and Blow, whoſe names are now ſcarce known to the public. Theſe three, like Purcel, had expreſſion for their object, and on that account their works have ſhared the ſame fate. Nor ſhould we probably at this day have any traces of their compoſitions remaining, were not ſome of them employed in the church ſervice: where, thro' a falſe taſte in the performers, and a total inability to give them

their

their due force of expreſſion, they loſe the greateſt part of their beauty, and conſequently muſt in time be ſupplanted by others more adapted to the prevailing taſte.

I ſhall finiſh this head with a quotation from the abbot Gravina, wherein the judgement which he had paſſed upon the Italian muſic, whoſe ſuperiority over all the modern kinds is generally allowed, affords a ſtrong confirmation of what I have advanced upon this ſubject. He ſays, ‘ * The ‘ muſic, which we hear now on our ſtages, is far ‘ from producing the ſame effects as that of the ‘ antients. Inſtead of imitating and expreſſing ‘ the meaning of the words, it contributes only ‘ to enervate and choak it: wherefore it is as diſ‘ agreeable to thoſe who have a juſtneſs of taſte, ‘ as it is pleaſing to ſuch as differ from reaſon. In ‘ fact, vocal muſic ought to imitate the natural ‘ language of the human paſſions, rather than ‘ the ſinging of canary birds, which our muſic ‘ affects ſo vaſtly to mimic with it's quaverings ‘ and boaſted cadences: Tho' we have at preſent ‘ a very ſkilful muſician, and a man of good ‘ ſenſe, who is not carried away with the torrent. ‘ But our poetry having been corrupted by the ‘ exceſs of ornaments and figures, the contagion ‘ has ſpread itſelf into our muſic. 'Tis the fate ‘ of all arts, which have a common origin and ‘ object, that the infection paſſes from one to ‘ the other. Our muſic is therefore ſo loaded at

* Abbate Gravina della tragedia.

'preſent with trifles and gewgaws, that we can 'hardly trace any remains of the natural expreſſi-'on. Nor, tho' it flatters the ear, is it there-'fore fit for tragedy; becauſe the imitation and 'expreſſion of the inarticulate language of the 'paſſions is the chief merit of dramatic muſic. 'If our muſic is ſtill agreeable to us, 'tis becauſe 'we know no better, and it tickles the ear, 'which it does in common with the warbling of 'goldfinches and nightingales. It reſembles thoſe 'Chineſe pictures which have no imitation of na-'ture, and are only pleaſing by reaſon of the vi-'vacity and variety of their colours.'

Thirdly, as to painting. Here it muſt at once occur, that as the buſineſs of the hiſtory-painter is to repreſent human nature in a manner which ſhall be at once graceful and expreſſive, when animated by all it's variety of paſſions and affections; and that, in order to do this, he muſt be able to give all the various configurations of the muſcles of the face, together with the whole deportment of the body, and action of the limbs, which are the natural concomitant ſigns of thoſe paſſions; and all theſe muſt be in the moſt exact degree of due proportion; he could no where meet with ſuch perfect ſubjects as amongſt the orators. There he would find the moſt complete models ready to his hand, not only of the moſt animated expreſſion, but alſo of the moſt graceful; not only of the moſt natural and forcible action, but alſo of the moſt becoming, and ſuch as was regulated by the niceſt art. Nor is it poſſible to conceive any look, attitude,

attitude, or geſture, which the painter might have occaſion for in all the ſeveral ſtyles, whether of the grand, the terrible, the graceful, the tender, the paſſionate, the joyous; whether expreſſive of the more furious and violent paſſions, as anger, hatred, &c. or of the more calm and pleaſing, as of pity, joy, &c. which he might not have frequent opportunities of catching warm from the life in the endleſs variety of ſubjects treated of by an impaſſioned orator. From whom could an Apelles borrow the tender, and the graceful, ſo well as from the man whoſe power of perſuaſion was irreſiſtible? From whom the grand, and terrible, ſo well as from

* 'Thoſe antient—whoſe reſiſtleſs eloquence
'Wielded at will that fierce democratie,
'Shook th' arſenal, and fulmined over Greece
'To Macedon and Artaxerxes' throne.'

How could a Phidias have given ſuch ſuitable forms to the creatures of fancy, how could he ſo juſtly have framed an image of the god of wit and eloquence, as by a faithful tranſcript from a Pericles, in whoſe lips the Graces were ſaid to inhabit †? Or how could he have made ſo auguſt a ſtatue of a Jupiter *Tonans*, as from a repreſen-

* Paradiſe regained.

† Quid Pericles? cujus in labris veteres comici, etiam cum illi malediceręnt (quod tum Athenis fieri licebat) leporem habitaſſe dixerunt: tantamque in eo vim fuiſſe, ut in eorum mentibus qui audiſſent quaſi aculeos quoſdam relinqueret. Cic. de orat. l. 3.

tation of the ſame Pericles, when at other times he was ſaid to 'thunder and lighten in the aſ-'ſembly of the people? †' Nor did the orators afford to the painters patterns for imitation in themſelves only, they likewiſe opened whole volumes, wherein they might ſtudy the paſſions at large in all their ſeveral modifications, by means of the ſtrong impreſſions made by their harangues upon their auditors; who, in proportion to their ſeveral degrees of ſenſibility were all actuated and inflamed, and muſt therefore have afforded an infinite variety of objects, as well as degrees of paſſion, from which a judicious obſerver might cull what would beſt ſuit his purpoſe. An artiſt in thoſe times might have had a better opportunity of ſeeing all the nobler paſſions fully and properly diſplayed, and in a greater variety of ſubjects, in one ſingle day, than he could now in a whole life ſpent in the ſearch, or from an obſervation of ſuch ſubjects as caſually fall in his way. Indeed the advantage which the painters of thoſe times muſt have had, by theſe means, over all who ſucceeded them, is ſo very obvious, that it would ſavour of uſeleſs declamation to enlarge further upon this head.

† Qui, ſi tenui genere uteretur, nunquam ab Ariſtophane poeta fulgurare, tonare, permiſcere Græciam dictus eſſet. Orat.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

That it is almoſt impoſſible that the maſters in theſe ſeveral arts ſhould arrive at perfection, without the lights and aſſiſtance borrowed from oratory.

TO begin with painting. It has already been made appear, that no one can be a maſter in that art, who can not exhibit a juſt view of the various looks and geſtures which are the natural concomitant ſigns of the ſeveral paſſions and affections: that this view muſt not only be expreſſive, but exact in the degrees of expreſſion given to each paſſion, ſuited to the occaſion; without which, tho' it may have force, it will be void of propriety: and laſtly, that this view muſt be taken immediately from life, and not from the works of other artiſts. Here it muſt be obſerved, that as there is a natural and artificial language, ſo there is alſo a natural and artificial action. By natural language I mean the inarticulate tones which nature herſelf has given to the paſſions, and which are equally well underſtood by all perſons of all nations. Thus the cries and ſhrieks of a foreigner in diſtreſs move the human heart as much, and as inſtinctively draw people to his aſſiſtance as thoſe of a countryman: and thus laughter, and all expreſſions of joy and merriment, excite the ſame emotions in people of different nations. Theſe natural ſounds in ſome degree accompany all the paſſions, tho' they are more or leſs perceptible, in proportion as thoſe are violent or moderate. By artificial language

is meant thoſe arbitrary marks affixed to ideas
different nations, and which, having no natu
connexion with them, are only intelligible to t
natives of each country, or thoſe who ſtudy th
ſpeech. In the ſame manner there is alſo a natu
and an artificial action. The natural is that whi
ſpontaneouſly reſults from the emotions of t
heart, and to which nature has annexed a pow
indicative of the paſſions. The artificial is th
which, like the words of a language, has no n
tural congruity with the paſſions or ſentimen
but has it's foundation in caprice and faſhion, a
is by cuſtom annexed to certain modes of expref
on in particular countries; it is therefore inte
ligible only to the natives of thoſe countries, a
conſequently can have no force but with them,
ſuch as are ſufficiently converſant with them
acquire a knowlege of their meaning. Now
in all caſes it is known, that nature muſt give w
to the power of mode and faſhion, it often ha
pens that this artificial action, tho' directly o
poſite to the natural, is eſtabliſhed in it's roon
ſo that no traces of the latter remain. And th
muſt neceſſarily be the caſe in all nations whe
no care is taken to cultivate and ſupport natur
action. For if art be not employed as an han
maid to nature, ſhe will ever make herſelf mi
treſs. When judgement and induſtry ſleep, c
price and idleneſs ſeize the reins. If we take
view of the different nations of Europe, we ſha
find that artificial action has almoſt univerſall
ſupplanted the natural; and that the ſeveral pe
pl

ples do not differ more from each other in their ſpeech, than in their geſtures. Thus the French, who are of an airy volatile nature, accompany almoſt every word with grimace, and uſe a deal of action when diſcourſing on the moſt trifling ſubjects: while the proud Spaniard has habitually ſubdued all muſcular motion, which he thinks inconſiſtent with his dignity, and preſerves as much as poſſible, upon all occaſions, an inflexibility of countenance, and an unmoved gravity of deportment. The Engliſh in general, who have more liberty than any other people, and amongſt whom, from this unbounded freedom, every one follows his own humour as his guide, have almoſt as many ſpecies of action as there are individuals in the country; excepting only ſome religious ſects amongſt them, who have adopted certain modes of looks and deportment peculiar to themſelves, which run thro' the different bodies, and make them appear as diſtinct from the reſt of their countrymen as if the iſland were inhabited by different nations. Such, for inſtance, are the more rigid quakers: from an obſervation of the countenance, gait, and geſture, of the members in which ſect, one would think that they were all caſt in the ſame mould, or cut out by the ſame pattern. Theſe, like the Spaniards, have alſo ſubdued by habit all viſible marks of emotion, except when they give way to abſurd, unnatural, and wild geſtures, proceeding from the fancied operations of the ſpirit; and in theſe alſo they generally reſemble each other, and are always moved by the

ſpirit in the ſame manner. But amongſt the re
of the people, there are hardly two to be foun
who accompany their thoughts with actions ex
actly ſimilar. Thoſe are generally taken up b
chance, and confirmed by habit, and become i
time ſo much a part of a man's ſelf, that he uſe
them involuntarily, and applies them indiſcrimi
nately to all ſorts of ſubjects, only with more o
leſs vehemence, according as he himſelf is mor
or leſs actuated. Things being in this ſituation
I ſhould be glad to know where any modern arti
could poſſibly find living ſubjects from which h
might copy true natural expreſſion, and action
If a Spaniſh painter were to draw an hiſtory piece
and borrow his figures from ſuch life as he is con
verſant with in his own country, tho' the piec
might even ſeem natural and excellent to the un
ſtudied and untravelled natives, yet to perſons c
all other countries it muſt appear to be devoi
both of meaning and grace. Were a Frenchma
to draw after nature in his country, his piec
might appear there to have both force and beaut
to the illiterate; but in other places it muſt b
conſidered only as a groupe of frantic and un
meaning figures. And if we bring it home t
ourſelves, we ſhall find the caſe infinitely worſ
in regard to our painters. For tho' in thoſe coun
tries the expreſſion and action of countenance an
limbs be for the moſt part artificial, yet the ſam
kind being generally uſed upon the ſame occaſion
by all perſons of the ſame rank in life and breed
ing, it becomes perfectly intelligible to all wh

are converſant with them, and a repreſentation of it is as well underſtood as their ſpeech by the natives, and thoſe who reſide any time amongſt them. But in England, except amongſt the common people, with whom ſuch pains have not been taken to ſuppreſs all viſible emotions of nature, by what is commonly called good breeding, there is no general action, either natural or artificial, ſufficiently uſed to characteriſe the ſentiments and paſſions in a repreſentation taken from the life, even to us at home; much leſs can it be intelligible to our neighbours. People do not differ more from one another here in their phyſiognomy, than they do in their action. Every individual has ſomething peculiar to himſelf, which proceeds either from his humour, or mere chance and cuſtom; and when there is any thing ſingular or odd in it, there is no farther notice taken of it than to ſay, Oh! that is Mr. ſuch-a-one's way. Now I ſhould be glad to know what a genius in painting, ſuperior even to the greateſt of the antients, who happened to be born, and to paſs his life in this country, could poſſibly do, thus circumſtanced? He can not produce any perfect work which is not taken from life, and the things which he wants chiefly to take from life, he can never ſee. Let us ſuppoſe ſuch an artiſt, born with all the talents neceſſary to form an hiſtory painter, ſearching about for proper ſubjects from which he might borrow impaſſioned looks, forcible geſture, and graceful attitudes, in order to give life to the figures in his piece, and to unite in the whole propriety, grace, and expreſſion.

If he goes to the ſenate-houſe, he may perhaps ſee there a Britiſh orator haranguing upon the fate of the nation, and the liberties of Europe; with great good ſenſe indeed, and in well-choſen words, worthy to be read ſeveral times over when reduced to writing; but with leſs emotion than a Frenchman would ſpeak of the diſcompoſing his perriwig. This excellent diſcourſe is perhaps delivered with his hands in his boſom, or if decorated with action, it is only ſuch as reſults from habit, and of which he is at the time unconſcious; ſuch as playing with his hat, fumbling in his pockets, ſettling his perriwig, toſſing or twiſting his head, and ſee-ſawing his body. If he goes from thence to the bar, he will hardly fare much better. There he may hear a long and eloquent piece of pleading delivered with an unmoved compoſure of countenance, and the orator perhaps twirling a piece of pack-thread round his fingers, which is humouroufly called in the ſpectator the thread of his diſcourſe; or elſe every now and then filling up his pauſes by applying his noſegay to his noſtrils. Since the uſe of tobacco indeed ſome of the younger ſort have found a great ſubſidium to the gracefulneſs of their action by the proper management of the ſnuff-box. As to the pulpit, I believe I need hardly mention that he would find little or no aſſiſtance there, unleſs it were for pieces of ſtill life. If from an obſervation of the orators he reaps ſo little benefit, he will hardly find any from their ſeveral auditories, who certainly can diſcover no more emotion than what

what is excited by the ſpeakers. I do not mean, but that in all theſe places there may be found ſeveral of ſuperior talents, who do not fall into theſe puerilities, and improprieties of geſture and behaviour; but it will be no very confident aſſertion to affirm, that even the beſt of thoſe, poſſeſſed of the ſtrongeſt natural talents, on account of the want of opportunities of ſtudying an art, which of all others requires the moſt pains, will hardly be able to afford in themſelves perfect patterns, for imitation, of grace, propriety, and energy of expreſſion, in their countenance and action. And this may ſerve to ſhew the reaſon why England never yet has, and probably never will, if things ſhould remain in their preſent ſituation, produce a good hiſtory painter. Several have acquitted themſelves well in landſcapes, animals, flowers, and the repreſentation of all ſuch things as they could immediately copy from nature; and have therein fallen ſhort of their neighbours only ſo far, as their opportunities of making themſelves maſters of the mechanical part of their profeſſion were inferior. Some alſo have ſhewn themſelves excellent maſters of expreſſion in ſcenes of low life, drawn from living objects, amongſt whom the language of the paſſions had not been effaced by art. Such are many of the performances of the celebrated Hogarth. Now what reaſon can be aſſigned, that they ſhould not be as well able to delineate the various outward configurations produced by the nobler and more exalted paſſions, provided they could

could find as good ſubjects in life to take them from, and had as frequent opportunities of obſerving them? From the ſame principles we may conclude, that no other country in Europe can poſſibly produce real artiſts in that way. For as they can no where find grace, propriety, and expreſſion, of action, attitude, and look, in living ſubjects, they can only ſearch for them in the remains of the antient artiſts; and conſequently can at beſt be but copyiſts. The ſtandard of nature being now every where loſt, the remains of antiquity are the ſole archetypes to which the compoſitions of the moderns are referred, which obtain a comparative value in proportion to their near approaches to the ſtyle and manner of thoſe. Hence it will follow, that they who have the moſt free acceſs and frequent opportunities of ſtudying and obſerving thoſe originals muſt (*cæteris paribus*) obtain the firſt place, and that they who form themſelves only upon the works of theſe copiers muſt be of an inferior rank. Every ſucceſſive impreſſion taken from an impreſſion muſt be weaker than the former; and the performance of a copier taken from one who was himſelf a copyiſt, muſt be conſidered as a reflection from a reflection, or an echo from an echo; every ſucceſſive repetition of which muſt grow fainter and fainter. And this may poſſibly ſerve as a ſolution why Italy has produced the greateſt number, and the higheſt claſs of hiſtory painters of any country in Europe; and Great Britain the feweſt, and the leaſt conſpicuous of any, where that art has been at all cultivated.

What

What has been ſaid in regard to painting, will hold equally good with reſpect to muſic. As in the one, when artificial looks and geſtures are ſubſtituted in a country in the room of ſuch as are natural, the painter can have no proper ſubjects from which he can draw perfect repreſentations of human nature; ſo in the other, where artificial tones and ſounds are made to ſupply the voice of nature, the muſical compoſer can have no archetypes from which to borrow juſt and forcible expreſſion of the paſſions and ſentiments. So that he is obliged either to give way to his fancy entirely in the various combinations of ſounds; or, if he aims at expreſſion, it can be only of the artificial kind, which is uſed in his own country, and which, containing no natural power, will not appear to foreign ears to have any force. And this may perhaps be the reaſon why ſome of the French operas are heard with ſuch raptures by the natives, tho' they are even diſguſtful to ſtrangers.

And as to poetry, beſides the many advantages which it might derive from oratory, it has been already ſhewn, that the perfection of the poet's inſtrument, in the refinement of language, muſt be entirely owing to the ſtudy of eloquence. Nor is it poſſible that any poet can be maſter of expreſſion in his numbers, who is unſkilled in that art. Poetical expreſſion conſiſts in a proper combination and arrangement of ſyllables and words, which, if juſtly repeated, will produce certain tones and ſounds; now, if the poet does not know how to repeat even his own verſes with propriety and

and grace (which is almoſt univerſally the caſe of all the modern writers) how is it poſſible that he can be a maſter of expreſſion in numbers?

Upon the leaſt conſideration it will appear, that it was in the very nature of oratory to ſupply theſe deficiencies, and prevent thoſe deviations from nature which muſt of courſe affect the ſeveral imitative arts. The buſineſs of the orator was to move the paſſions of all ſorts of auditors, without which he could not accompliſh his end. Now it is evident, that the energy of nature muſt have much more efficacy in this reſpect than the power of art. It was therefore incumbent on the orator to preſerve, as much as poſſible, all the various looks, geſtures, and tones, which nature herſelf has annexed to the ſeveral paſſions and affections, to be an univerſal language, intelligible by all ranks and orders of people, of whatever age or country; and the whole employment of art was only to regulate theſe in ſuch a manner, as to exhibit them in their higheſt degree of beauty and grace, without robbing them of their force. The manner of the public ſpeakers would of courſe be imitated by their hearers, and the natural would become every where the faſhionable action. Hence the artiſts in ſuch a country might every where find proper ſubjects for imitation ready to their hands. The compoſitions in thoſe arts which imitate thro' natural *media*, ſuch as muſic and painting, would be intelligible not at home only, but in all other countries, and their beauty be every where perceived. Their poetry alſo, which

imitates

imitates only thro' an artificial *medium*, and conſequently would be unintelligible to ſuch as were not acquainted with the arbitrary ſigns made uſe of to expreſs ideas in it, would, on account of the fame of the writers, be ſought after by all thoſe who had leiſure and opportunity to acquire knowlege of thoſe ſigns; and they would find their labour well rewarded, not only in the propoſed end of underſtanding thoſe pieces, but likewiſe in the delight which the very means of arriving at that end would afford them; I mean the pleaſure which they muſt take in the contemplation and ſtudy of a beautiful language, poliſhed and refined to the utmoſt.

CHAP. VIII.

Of the encouragements given to the ſeveral artiſts during the flouriſhing ſtate of oratory.

WHAT I have ſaid above naturally leads me to the conſideration of another point, which is of the utmoſt conſequence in bringing the liberal arts to perfection; I mean the encouragement given to the ſeveral artiſts in the rewards which attended their labours. Theſe rewards are of two kinds; fame and profit. When conſidered ſeparately, the former is certainly the nobler motive to action, and the more likely to produce excellence in works; but neither of them can operate with ſuch force diſtinctly, as when their powers are united. When fame is the motive, the more

more general and extended it is, the greater will it's influence be over the minds of ſuch as aſpire after that for a reward. A love of fame is of all others the ſtrongeſt incentive to a generous mind, and is the moſt boundleſs in it's deſires. An artiſt, animated by that, is not contented with the praiſes of his own countrymen, he graſps at the applauſe of all his cotemporaries in the different countries of the peopled globe; nor does he ſtop here, but looks greedily forward to all future generations, and nothing leſs will content him than a proſpect of perpetuity to his works, or to his name. As ſuch an unbounded view is the moſt likely to rouze and animate him to the utmoſt exertion of all his faculties; ſo nothing can ſo effectually induce him to labour and toil after the greateſt accuracy and correctneſs in his compoſitions, which are to paſs in review before ſuch numbers of unbiaſſed judges. When the leſſer motive of profit is prevalent with an artiſt, it need ſcarce be mentioned, that in proportion to the price which his works bear, he will be encouraged and ſtimulated in his labours. But in all rewards, whether of fame or profit, it is neceſſary that they ſhould be diſtributed with the niceſt judgement, and the moſt exact impartiality; without which they not only loſe their end, but become the higheſt diſcouragements to real artiſts. The abbé Du Bos, in ſpeaking of this ſubject, ſays: 'If a ſovereign diſtri-
'butes his favours impartially, they are an en-
'couragement to artiſts; which they ceaſe to be
'as

'as ſoon as they are miſplaced. Nay, it would be 'much better, were a ſovereign not to diſtribute 'any favours at all, than to do it without judge-'ment. An able artiſt may find means to com-'fort himſelf under the contempt and neglect in-'to which his art is fallen. A † poet may even 'bear with the diſreliſh people chance to have for 'poetry; but he is ready to burſt with envy and 'ſpite, when he ſees a prize given to works that 'are far inferior to his own performances. He 'grows deſperate at the ſight of an injuſtice 'which is a perſonal affront to him, and he re-'nounces, as much as in him lies, the muſes for 'for ever.'

As I have already proved that the ſeveral artiſts had the higheſt opportunities, during the flouriſhing times of oratory, to improve their talents to the utmoſt, ſo I ſhall now ſhew that they had alſo the higheſt encouragements afterwards to diſplay them: that the incentives were of the nobleſt kind, the rewards the greateſt, and diſtributed with more judgement and impartiality, than could be expected in any other age and country. To begin with the higheſt of all incentives, that of fame. It has been already ſhewn, that they were not in this reſpect confined to their own country; but their works were every where ſought after, and admired by the curious of all nations. Being tranſcripts from nature, they were intelligible by all people, of all countries, and thro' all ages.

† We have a ſtrong inſtance of this in Milton.

Even

Even the imitations thro' artificial media, ſuch as the works of the poets, on account of the beauty and perfection of the language in which they wrote, were likely to ſpread over the earth, and to laſt as long as ſun and moon endured. What a mighty encouragement was this to all ſuch writers as were actuated by a principle of fame, and extended their views to future generations? They alſo whoſe chief end was the enjoyment of preſent fame and honours had the nobleſt opportunities of being gratified to the utmoſt extent of their wiſhes. This matter has been fully diſplayed by the abbè Du Bos in the following paſſage. 'The 'opportunities of receiving the applauſes and fa-'vours of great aſſemblies were very frequent in 'Greece. As we have congreſſes in our times, 'where the deputies of princes and ſtates meet in 'order to terminate wars, and regulate the fates 'of provinces, and the limits of kingdoms; in like 'manner there were aſſemblies formerly from 'time to time, where the moſt illuſtrious perſo-'nages of Greece rendevouzed, in order to de-'cide the merit of the moſt eminent painter, the 'moſt moving poet, and the beſt wreſtler. This 'was the real motive which induced ſuch multi-'tudes of people to flock to thoſe public games 'that were celebrated in different cities. The 'public porticos where the poets went to recite 'their verſes, or painters to expoſe their pictures, 'were the places where the better ſort of com-

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'pany uſed generally to meet. In fine, * "the "works of great maſters, as Pliny obſerves, were "not conſidered, at the time here mentioned, as "common moveables deſtined to imbelliſh a pri- "vate perſon's apartment; no, they were looked "upon as the jewels of the ſtate, and as a public "treaſure, the enjoyment whereof was due to all "the inhabitants." The ardour which painters 'and poets had in thoſe times to improve their 'talents was not inferior to the eagerneſs which 'we obſerve in the people of our days to heap up 'money, and to attain to great employments in 'the ſtate.'

How muſt the hearts of artiſts in thoſe times have exulted, and how muſt their ears have been raviſhed with the general and united praiſes, and applauſes, of the moſt auguſt aſſemblies † of the world! And how muſt this have incited and ſpurred them to the utmoſt ſtretch of their faculties, in compariſon of the preſent cold approbation given in private, and the ſlow growth of reputation

* Non enim parietes excolebant dominis tantum, nec domos uno in loco manſuras, quæ ex incendio rapi non poſſent. Omnis eorum ars urbibus excubabat, pictorque res communis terrarum erat. Plin. hiſt. l. 35.

† We may eaſily judge what an incitement this muſt have been to men of genius, when we have it on record, that the great Themiſtocles, upon being received at the Olympic feſtival with the general ſhouts and applauſes of the aſſembly, ſaid, 'This was the happieſt day he 'had ever known, and that he then reaped the full 'reward of all his labours.'

from

from the ſuffrages of individuals? Eſpecially when it is conſidered that this did not end merely in fame, but the artiſts, who bore away the prizes, were immediately raiſed, perhaps from meanneſs and obſcurity, into great perſonages, ſo as to be conſidered of an equal rank with thoſe who were entruſted with the higheſt offices. And it was often known that men of the nobleſt birth, and greateſt riches in Greece, did not think it a diſhonour to marry their daughters to ſuch eminent poets, painters, and muſicians, as had diſtinguiſhed themſelves in an extraordinary manner on theſe occaſions. If the chief object of ſome was profit, it is evident from the great price which their works bore, and the large fortunes raiſed by ſeveral artiſts, how amply they might be gratified in this point alſo.

But the higheſt incentive of all to the exertion of true genius was the moral certainty of rewards being diſtributed with ſkill and impartiality. The multitude of judges effectually prevented corruption, and their ſkill aroſe partly from a general good taſte diffuſed thro' the whole body of the people, and partly from the great opportunities which all who were inclined to it had of forming and fixing their taſte upon the beſt models, by means of the moſt excellent works of all kinds being the property of the public, and conſequently acceſſible at all times, and by all perſons. On which accounts it is more than probable, that a common illiterate Athenian might be a more competent judge of perfection in all the liberal arts,

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than the niceſt and moſt pains-taking of our connoiſſeurs. They had conſtant opportunities of comparing the copies with their true archetypes, with nature herſelf. They had daily before their eyes the great originals of grace and expreſſion, in the looks, geſture, and tones of their orators; and therefore could not fail of judging whether the copies were right: a man in thoſe days might ſay, that the turn of countenance, the attitude and action of a figure repreſented in a hiſtory piece were juſt and expreſſive, becauſe he had ſeen ſuch uſed by a Pericles, a Demoſthenes, or a Demades, upon a ſimilar occaſion, and in the repreſentation of a like paſſion or affection. He might paſs judgement likewiſe with equal certainty in regard to tones, ſounds, and cadences in muſical or poetical expreſſion. Whereas a modern critic has no archetype to refer to but the works of the moſt celebrated maſters. He can only ſay that ſuch a picture is in the manner of a Raphael or a Rubens, or ſuch a poem and ſuch a piece of muſic is in the ſtyle of this poet, and that compoſer. The utmoſt therefore that he can arrive at is to form only a comparative judgement: and even in that reſpect, in many caſes, an unlettered Athenian had, without ſtudy or application, great advantages over him, by means of the conſtant opportunities which he had of ſeeing all the greateſt works of the greateſt maſters publickly expoſed to view: which muſt imperceptibly infuſe into him a good comparative taſte, tho' he ſhould be totally ignorant of all rules, and principles. Whereas a mo-

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dern virtuoſo muſt travel over all Europe, be at great pains and expence to get acceſs to the cabinets of the curious, and even then will hardly be allowed time enough to examine them ſufficiently, ſo as to form an accurate judgement of the ſeveral works. And this was the true ſource of that general good taſte amongſt the antients, which we find ſo greatly celebrated. Hence it was that if a ſyllable was pronounced by an actor in the leaſt longer or ſhorter than it ought to be, that the whole audience to a man cried out againſt it. Hence it was that the Athenians obtained that remarkable character from Cicero; * 'The judgement of the Athenians was ſo true and juſt, that 'they could not liſten to any thing but what was 'pure and elegant.'

It muſt be allowed that an artiſt could no where find ſuch due encouragement, or have ſuch moral certainty of meeting with rewards proportioned to his merit, as from the ſuffrages of a free people, amongſt whom a general good taſte prevailed. Next to that, tho' far ſhort indeed, is the countenance and favour of an abſolute prince, when he happens to be a man of ſkill and integrity, or is ſerved by miniſters poſſeſſed of thoſe qualities. But in a country where neither the prince is abſolute, nor the people in general have a good taſte, it is hardly poſſible that the arts ſhould ever flouriſh. In the Engliſh conſtitution, which like the

* Athenienſes, quorum ſemper fuit ſincerum prudenſque judicium, nihil ut poſſent niſi incorruptum audire & elegans.

antient

antient republics has liberty for it's object, and wherein each claims a right of judging for himſelf in all matters whatever, it is extreamly neceſſary that the people ſhould have proper opportunities of having their judgements rightly informed. For in proportion as a bad taſte ſhould prevail amongſt them, in proportion will the works of ſuch artiſts as flatter that vicious taſte be encouraged; and every encouragement given to the falſe becomes a diſcouragement to the true genius. Nothing therefore can poſſibly raiſe the arts to any pitch of perfection amongſt us, but a general good taſte in the people; and nothing can poſſibly create and diffuſe this general good taſte, but the ſtudy and practice of oratory.

CHAP. IX.

Objections to the above hypotheſis, drawn from the works of the modern artiſts; and anſwer to the objection.

TO all that I have ſaid in ſupport of my hypotheſis, I know it will at once be objected, that the revival of the arts in Europe, and their moſt flouriſhing ſtate, were brought about without any of the aids of oratory, which I have pretended to be ſo neceſſary to their perfection. The boaſted ages of Leo X. and Lewis XIV. with all the great maſters which they produced, will immediately be quoted upon me. I am much deceived if a thorough diſcuſſion of this point would

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not ſerve to illuſtrate and eſtabliſh my opinion more clearly and firmly than any thing elſe. But as this would lead me into too wide a field for the bounds of this work, and as I intend on another occaſion to enter into a more minute diſquiſition of this whole matter, I ſhall content myſelf at preſent with touching only upon ſome of the principal points, in order to invalidate, in ſome meaſure, the objections which may be raiſed upon this head.

In the firſt place, nothing can be more clearly proved, than that the great artiſts during thoſe periods borrowed their chief excellencies from the works of the antients, and conſequently that they were at beſt but imitators and copyiſts.

Secondly, that the ſuppoſed perfection of their works has not been ſettled by any abſolute ſtandard, but by compariſon only.

Laſtly, that the few originals, which have been produced ſince the revival of the arts, have been indebted for their chief value to oratory.

In ſpeaking to theſe ſeveral points, I would have it remembered, that I do not at all take into my account ſuch works as depend merely upon the ſkill and knowlege of the maſters in their ſeveral arts, but only ſuch as have reference to their great end of repreſenting human nature in it's moſt exalted, and dignified ſtate.

It was in the age of Julius II. and Leo X. that the arts aroſe out of the tombs in which they had ſo long been buried; and, during that period, ſome of them arrived at a degree of perfection, which

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all the endeavours of man have not ſince been able to keep up. But they were far from going hand in hand together, and keeping an even pace, as they were always obſerved to do in Greece and Rome; ſoon after their births, painting and ſtatuary left their ſiſters far behind, and reached the goal when poetry and muſic had ſcarce ſtarted. Let us ſee how this diverſity of the fate and progreſs of the modern arts, from thoſe of the antients, can be reconciled to reaſon: for in Greece and Rome poetry and muſic were the elder, and ſtarted firſt, tho' they were quickly followed and overtaken in the race by their younger ſiſters: and indeed in the natural order of things this muſt have been the caſe. Nor do I know upon what principle this difference can be accounted for, but that of plagiariſm, and ſuppoſition that the modern artiſts borrowed their chief beauties from the works of the antients; eſpecially when we find that the ſolution of this difficulty will follow in the moſt natural manner from that principle.

It is well known that it was owing to the great pains and aſſiduity of Julius II. and Leo X. in ſearching after thoſe concealed treaſures, that almoſt all the precious remains of antiquity, both of painting and ſtatuary, which were buried under the ruins of Rome, were brought to light. Theſe were collected and preſerved with the utmoſt care by thoſe two paſſionate lovers of the arts. Their great liberalities encouraged all perſons of genius to apply themſelves cloſely to the ſtudy of them: and, with ſuch advantages as they poſſeſſed, of

having ſo great a variety of the moſt perfect models before their eyes, it is no wonder that the progreſs of the firſt artiſts was ſo rapid, and that their works far excelled all thoſe of their ſucceſſors. The painters particularly had patterns in theſe antient pictures of grace and expreſſion, which were no longer to be met with in nature; an advantage which none of their ſucceſſors could have, as thoſe pieces in a few years, after having been expoſed to the external air, mouldered away, and at laſt totally diſappeared. The * firſt painters had therefore the moſt perfect models in thoſe great originals, which were immediate tranſcripts from nature; whilſt ſuch as were bred up under them had only copies to ſtudy in the works of their maſters, and conſequently were one degree farther removed, and could only ſee nature, as it were, in a ſecond reflection. Thoſe who were bred up under them again were ſtill more remote, 'till at laſt the object entirely diſappeared. And this perhaps may be found to be the true reaſon why hiſtory-painting has from thoſe days to theſe been in a conſtant ſtate of declenſion, ſo that ſcarce the ſhadow of it now appears upon earth. In ſtatuary alſo the firſt artiſts had the advantage of finding a prodigious number of the great works of antiquity collected together in one place; whilſt, thro' the negligence or want of taſte in the ſuc-

* It need ſcarce be mentioned alſo what benefit theſe firſt painters muſt have received, from the large collection of ſtatues then to be ſeen together at Rome.

ceeding

ceeding popes, thoſe immenſe treaſures have been ſcattered over the world, and muſt be ſearched for in the collections of many private perſons, as well as kings and princes, thro' the ſeveral countries of Europe. But as ſtatues and pieces of ſculpture are not made of ſuch periſhable materials as pictures, and as theſe models are ſtill in being, artiſts of genius may ſtill form their taſte upon them by pains and travelling, and therefore we have good ſtatuaries and ſculptors yet to be found in ſeveral countries in Europe, according to the encouragement given to their ſeveral abilities; nor have we any reaſon to ſuppoſe that there will be any great deficiency of artiſts in this way, whilſt ſuch patterns for their imitation remain, and whilſt ſuitable rewards attend their labours. Nothing can ſerve more ſtrongly to confirm this point than the ſucceſs of the academy of Lewis XIV founded at Rome by that monarch, at an immenſe expence, in order to give young perſons of genius the utmoſt opportunities of improving themſelves in thoſe arts. But fifty years care and coſt ſcarce produced one painter of note; whereas a large number of ſculptors was formed there, whoſe works far excelled all thoſe of their cotemporaries. As the great aſſiſtance, which the maſters derived from the remains of the antients, in thoſe two arts, was a ſufficient cauſe of the rapidity of their progreſs, ſo the ſlow advances made in muſic, and poetry, can be fully accounted for upon the ſame principle. It is well known that the antient muſic was entirely loſt, ſo that the men of genius

for that art, having no ſuch lights to guide them, as the others had, were a long time groping their way in the dark; and when they emerged into light found themſelves at a vaſt diſtance behind their brethren of the other profeſſions. For this reaſon alſo, having none of their great maſters of antiquity to be their guides, they ſteered towards a wrong object, and made pleaſure their end, which by the antients was only uſed as the means. The poets indeed were in a different ſituation: they, like the painters and ſtatuaries, had the nobleſt works of Greece and Rome to ſerve them as patterns; but their inſtruments were too poor to give a juſt copy of the grace and beauty to be found in thoſe originals. The languages of Europe were as yet in a rude ſtate *. The Italian, which was the leaſt corrupted of all thoſe derived from the antient Roman, was the firſt which gave any dawnings of elegance in modern poetry; and the French, ſoon after, with immenſe pains and induſtry, poliſhed their language as far as the nature of it would admit, ſo as to exhibit ſome faint repreſentation of the beauties to be found in the works of the antient poets. But it is eaſy to be ſeen in the writings of both countries, that their chief merit conſiſted in an imitation of the antients.

* That this was the true cauſe of the ſlow progreſs of poetry, and not any dearth of genius, may appear from the ſeveral excellent compoſitions in Latin, inferior to none but thoſe of the Auguſtan age, which at that time were produced by Sanazarius, Vida, &c.

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The Italians took the moſt daring flights, and boldly ſoared into the regions of epic poetry; but, however lofty to a modern eye their excurſions might appear, they fell far ſhort of their great maſters: and it was clear that they mounted only on borrowed wings, by the ſudden precipitate falls, and irregularities of motion, whenever they truſted to their native vigour. The French, more conſcious of their weakneſs, and knowing that their wings were only faſtened with wax, dreaded the fate of Icarus if they approached too near the ſun, and therefore never attempted any flights beyond the middle regions of tragic poetry. There too they followed the antients at a diſtance, and would venture into no track unmarked by them. As it is on their tragedies which the French value themſelves moſt, it is worth obſerving, that their chief merit ſeems to ariſe from a cold obſervation of the rules of the antients in the ſtructure of thoſe pieces; whilſt the chief point, a juſt repreſentation of the perſonages of the drama, has been neglected. The great heroes of Greece and Rome are all metamorphoſed into Frenchmen; and Alexander, Cæſar, and Scipio, are become Monſieurs of Paris. Upon the whole, if all that was borrowed from the antients by the Italian and French poets were to be reſtored, there would ſcarce anything great or noble remain; and perhaps the only truly original thing they could boaſt of would be their rhime; the full honour of which the antients would hardly envy them.

It is indeed ſo evident, from the works themſelves, that almoſt all the valuable modern compoſitions are but copies of the remains of antiquity, that the point need hardly be farther inſiſted on. The plagiariſm of ſtatuaries, ſculptors, and poets, is the moſt viſible; as the originals are in being, from which the artiſts have borrowed, and by a view of which the theft may be diſcovered. We can not indeed know how much the firſt painters borrowed from the pictures which have ſince been loſt; but it is more than probable that they were at leaſt as much indebted to them, as the other artiſts have been to what have remained. Nor can we doubt from what ſtores their imaginations were chiefly ſupplied, when we conſider how very improperly, on many occaſions, they have introduced ideas which could alone be borrowed from antient works, and were only ſuitable to their ſubjects. The abbé Du Bos has obſerved, 'That 'Michael Angelo was univerſally blamed, for 'having mixed the fictions of heathen poetry 'with the revealed articles of the laſt judgement, 'in the repreſentation he has drawn thereof, on 'the bottom wall of the chapel of Sixtus IV.' He alſo takes notice that Rubens in one of his pieces has drawn our Saviour in the attitude of a fabulous Jove, with a thunder-bolt in his hand, ready to dart it againſt the world. And in another place, treating of the ſame ſubject, he has the following paſſage: 'The picture in the gallery of 'Luxemburg, repreſenting the arrival of Mary of Medicis at Verſailles, is an hiſtorical compo-

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'ſition. The painter intended therefore to re-
'preſent the event agreeably to truth. The queen
'lands from on board the Tuſcan gallies. The
'lords and ladies, that accompany or receive her,
'are eaſy to be diſtinguiſhed. But the Nereids
'and Tritons, whom Rubens has repreſented
'ſounding their ſhells in the harbour, to expreſs
'the joy with which this maritime town received
'the new queen, make, to my fancy at leaſt, a
'very prepoſterous appearance. As I am ſenſible
'that none of theſe marine deities aſſiſted at the
'ceremony, this fiction deſtroys part of the effect,
'which the imitation would have produced in my
'mind. Rubens ought here, methinks, to have
'imbelliſhed his harbour with ornaments more
'reconcileable to probability. 'Things that are in-
'vented, in order to render a ſubject more agree-
'able, ſhould always be conſiſtent with it's exiſt-
'ence.' His obſervation is certainly juſt; and yet do we not ſee the ſame method practiſed in our poetry? The heathen divinities are ſtill the gods of the Chriſtian poets, and Jupiter, Apollo, Minerva, Cupid, and Venus, are daily introduced even upon modern ſubjects, tho' at the expence of veriſimilitude, which ought to be the chief object in all the imitative arts. But this, amongſt many others, is a clear proof from what ſtore-houſe the moderns have borrowed their ideas. This is ſtill more evident in ſtatuary, wherein the artiſts have not only copied the attitude and expreſſion of the antiques, but adorned their mo-

dern figures with the very dreſs and ornaments of the Greeks and Romans.

When therefore we reflect upon the progreſs of theſe four arts ſince their revival; that hiſtory-painting made it's quickeſt marches, and arrived at an higher point of perfection than has been ſince known, during the time that the artiſts had an opportunity of ſtudying the antient pictures: and, ſince thoſe periſhed, it has declined, and is now almoſt vaniſhed: that ſtatuary reached it's ſummit whilſt the artiſts had the beſt opportunity of examining the largeſt collection of antiques; and that the moſt admired works are ſtill produced by thoſe who have the beſt means of viewing thoſe models: that poetry in the ſeveral nations of Europe has made advances towards excellence, in proportion as the Greek and Roman authors were more or leſs generally ſtudied amongſt them; and that the compoſitions in this way are more or leſs valued in proportion as they reſemble thoſe ſtandards: that muſic, which had no patterns from antiquity to imitate, has never yet attained it's end, and is only a mere ſenſual delight, without contributing to the benefit of mankind: we may boldly conclude, 'That the great modern artiſts 'have borrowed their chief excellencies from 'the works of the antients, and conſequently 'that they are at beſt but imitators and copyiſts.'

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

That the ſuppoſed perfection of modern works has not been ſettled by any abſolute ſtandard, but by compariſon only.

IT is evident enough that the works of the greateſt modern artiſts in poetry, and ſtatuary have but a comparative value, and that there is a twofold judgment paſſed upon them. When compared with thoſe of the antients, they fall far ſhort of the perfection to be found in them; and appear, relatively, mean in the eyes of all perſons of true taſte: but, when compared with the performances of their cotemporaries, or ſuch as have ſucceeded them, the works of the moſt eminent acquire a ſuperiority above the reſt, as much as they themſelves are found inferior to thoſe of antiquity. Nor is there any reaſon to believe, but that the caſe would be exactly ſimilar with reſpect to painting and muſic, if the ſeveral compoſitions of the great antient maſters in thoſe arts had been preſerved and handed down to us in the ſame manner, as in the others. From the many wonderful accounts tranſmitted to us, by perſons of undoubted authority, of the amazing effects produced by the muſical compoſitions of the antients; we can not believe but that they were of a kind far ſuperior to ours: and tho' their paintings are loſt to us, yet ſome of them retain ſtill a kind of being in the elegant deſcriptions given of them by ſeveral authors, ſo as to enable us to form a tolerable

notion of their merit. Whoever reads Pliny's account of a picture drawn by Ariſtides, repreſenting a woman ſtabbed with a poniard, having a ſucking child at her breaſt; the praiſes which Auſonius beſtows upon the Medea of Timomachus; what Pliny and Quintilian both have ſaid upon the ſacrifice of Iphigenia by Timanthes; the excellent deſcription which Lucian gives of a grand piece repreſenting the marriage of Alexander and Roxana, as alſo the family of a Centaur drawn by Zeuxis, with many others to the ſame effect; can not but conclude that the painters of antiquity were maſters of the nobleſt and moſt accurate expreſſion, as well as of the fineſt poetic and picturesque compoſition. And indeed, when we find that all the antients, who have written upon thoſe ſubjects, are agreed in allowing that painting and muſic were in as high a degree of perfection as poetry and ſculpture; we can not refuſe our belief to the teſtimony of ſuch exquiſite judges.

Here it muſt be obſerved therefore, that, tho' the compoſitions in modern painting and muſic be generally thought to have a more abſolute degree of perfection than thoſe of poetry and ſculpture; yet, in fact, they have only a comparative value. The whole difference lies in this, that, as ſome of the nobleſt works of antiquity in the latter arts are ſtill remaining, the compoſitions of the moderns ſuffer much when compared with them; but, as all the traces of the former

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are loſt, the moſt eminent maſters of latter times can be only compared with ſuch as are inferior to themſelves: and conſequently, by ſuch a compariſon, their works muſt always appear in the moſt advantageous light. Nay, to modern judges, they muſt of courſe become the ſtandards of perfection. But, were the maſterly drawings of the antient painters ſtill in being, it is more than probable that the hiſtorical pieces of our moſt celebrated artiſts would be thrown at as great a diſtance by a compariſon with them, and ſink as much in their value, as the works of our poets and ſtatuaries have done. And could we hear the antient muſic performed in it's utmoſt perfection, our admiration of the modern would perhaps be changed into contempt, and the moſt excellent of our compoſers be conſidered only as agreeable triflers.

From this view it is evident, that, however the reputation of the modern artiſts in painting and muſic may have been raiſed by the loſs of the works of the antients, yet the arts themſelves muſt have ſuffered amazingly; and all true critical knowlege, with reſpect to thoſe, muſt have been proportionably leſs. For there can be no doubt, but that the curious enquirers into poetry and ſtatuary have much ſtronger, and more certain lights to guide their judgements, in aſcertaining the real value of any production in either of thoſe arts, by means of the twofold compariſon; whereas they who have a taſte for muſic and painting can

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only judge by comparison of the works of one modern with those of another.

CHAP. XI.

That the few originals, which have been produced since the revival of the arts, have been indebted for their chief value to oratory.

I HAVE already taken notice, that I speak all along only of such compositions in the imitative arts as are of the more exalted and heroic kind. Of these we shall perhaps find very few amongst the moderns which can be justly allowed to be originals. All that is called great and noble in statuary, has been apparently borrowed from the antients; as also in history-painting. Nor has the sublimer kind of poetry been less indebted to them. Every thing in our music indeed, must be allowed to be original, as it was of our own invention, and could owe nothing to antiquity; since that art had been wholly lost. But this, according to the modern practice, must be looked upon rather as a mathematical science, ornamented by fancy, than one of the imitative arts. Throughout all the nations of Europe, Italy and England alone can have the honour of boasting that they have produced some noble originals; Italy in painting, and England in poetry. The pictures of devotion, which chiefly employed the masters of the Italian school, might probably vie with the greatest productions of old, were they still subsisting, in point of force of expression, sublimity,

limity, and truth; becauſe the maſters had an opportunity of taking theſe warm from life in an infinite number of ſubjects daily to be ſeen in their chapels, in thoſe days when piety and enthuſiaſm were at their greateſt height. As praying with devotion, and an hearty zeal, muſt be allowed to be one of the moſt exalted ſpecies of oratory, and as nothing can be more ſtrongly characteriſed by the human features and geſture; the modern artiſts muſt have had as good ſubjects, and as frequent opportunities of drawing from the life, in this reſpect, as the antients had in others: ſo that, ſuppoſing an equality of genius and execution, there is good reaſon to believe, that the devotional pictures of the Italian painters may every way be equally excellent with the hiſtorical pieces of antiquity. This opinion will appear the more probable when we conſider, that, tho' the hiſtorical pieces of the moſt eminent Italian painters have raiſed great admiration, when compared with thoſe of others; yet they are far from being allowed to be the moſt excellent of their own works. It has been univerſally agreed, that the paintings on religious ſubjects of Angelo, Raphael, Titian, &c. are their moſt finiſhed pieces, and far ſuperior to their other works. Let it be remembered alſo, that during the age of Leo X. and for ſome time afterwards, zeal for religion was carried to a much higher pitch, on account of the ſtruggles occaſioned by the ſeveral ſeceſſions from the church of Rome, begun and carried on in thoſe days, than it probably ever was either before or ſince. This

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muſt not only have made a greater number of devotees, and afforded more frequent examples of a warm expreſſion, but muſt likewiſe have rouzed the Italian * preachers, always allowed to be the moſt animated of any in Europe, to the utmoſt exertion of their faculties; and conſequently have given advantages to the painters of thoſe days, in all ſubjects of this nature, over all artiſts of other countries, as well as their ſucceſſors in their own.

England has produced two poets in the ſublimer kinds of writing, the epic and tragic, who muſt be allowed to be truly originals. But it would be no difficult matter to prove, that they were indebted for the greateſt part of their excellence, and their undoubted ſuperiority over all the moderns of all nations, to their ſkill in oratory. Whoever is converſant in the writings of Milton, muſt be convinced that he made that art his peculiar ſtudy. No other poet has ſhewn ſo profound a knowlege of the power of ſounds, or the force of expreſſion from a proper arrangement of words. No writer of antiquity has ſhewn more perfect ſkill in the whole art of eloquence, than he has diſplayed in the ſpeeches of Satan and his fallen crew. Whoever examines carefully his account of the proceedings at the Pandæmonium in his ſecond book, will find, that in the ſpeeches of Satan himſelf, of Moloc, Belial, Mammon, and

* To this cauſe might probably be owing, the forcible expreſſion ſo much admired in one of the cartoons, where St. Paul is repreſented in the action of preaching to the Athenians.

Beelzebub,

Beelzebub, he ſeems to have taken in almoſt the whole compaſs of oratory; and that there is ſcarce a ſpecies of it, of which he has not given a noble and complete ſpecimen. Nor could the ſecretary of Cromwell have wanted ſubjects to draw after the life from that great maſter of perſuaſion and his aſſociates, by whom that art was as much cultivated, and was as uſeful to them in carrying their points, as the force of arms, and military ſkill.

Shakeſpear, whoſe towering genius, and uncommon reach of underſtanding, had endued him with an intuitive quickneſs in his ſearches into human nature, had acquired from the very profeſſion in which he was engaged an habitual and practical knowlege of the oratorial art, far ſuperior to all theory. To be convinced of his admirable ſkill in this reſpect, we need only look over his ſhort piece of advice to the player in his Hamlet; wherein we can not but wonder how it was poſſible, that ſo juſt and comprehenſive a ſyſtem of rules both for action and ſpeaking could have been comprized in ſo narrow a compaſs. It might be eaſily ſhewn, that the great ſucceſs of his pieces at this day, and the effects which they produce in the repreſentation, have been chiefly owing to his ſkill in the art of ſpeaking. It was that which enabled him to form a true dramatic ſtyle, that happy arrangement and diſpoſition of his words, ſo perfectly adapted to his ſubjects, which throw ſuch a luſtre on his ſentiments, and are ſo admirably ſuited to the mouth

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of the ſpeaker. Theſe are the beauties which particularly diſtinguiſh his plays, in the repreſentation at leaſt, and ſufficiently make amends for all the irregularities of his drama. Whilſt the works of moſt of our other writers, who have great advantages over him in other reſpects, thro' want of ſkill in this eſſential art, are heard with languor, or diſguſt. And this will be found the beſt reaſon why many plays ſtill give delight in the cloſet, which are inſupportable on the ſtage. The ſame verſes may give pleaſure to the eye, which are tedious to the ear; the ſtyle, which is not eaſy to the ſpeaker, becomes diſagreeable to the hearer; and no man can write well for the ſpeaker, who can not ſpeak well himſelf.

To obviate all the objections which may be raiſed againſt the hypotheſis which I have laid down, and to invalidate the arguments of the many writers on this ſubject, would far exceed the compaſs and deſign of this work. I have contented myſelf at preſent with endeavouring to make this opinion appear not improbable, and with curſorily taking notice of ſuch obvious objections as were moſt likely to occur at firſt view. I ſhall therefore leave the fuller proof to a future opportunity, and make no doubt but that the cloſer the examination is, the more will the opinion be juſtified. I ſhall conclude my arguments upon this head with one, which, to me at leaſt, appears an unanſwerable proof that the imitative arts borrowed their aids from oratory,

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not oratory from the imitative arts: that is, ſuppoſing that the maſters in the imitative arts copied from the orators and their auditories, the various expreſſions of paſſion, &c. it is clear that they immediately took them from life, from nature; whereas on a ſuppoſition that the orators borrowed their ſkill from the compoſition in the imitative arts, it is clear that they did not copy from nature, but from artificial works, and conſequently could not have arrived at ſo perfect an imitation in their way, as the other maſters; a point contradicted by fact, and the concurrent teſtimony of their cotemporaries.

But whether the hypotheſis be proved to be right, or not, it is at leaſt to be wiſhed that it were ſo; and more particularly by the people of Great Britain than any other nation upon earth. Becauſe from the very nature of their conſtitution, and their happineſs in being poſſeſſed of ſo fine a language, they are now the only people under the ſun capable of carrying the oratorial art to as high a degree of perfection as the Greeks and Romans; and conſequently the only people who have it in their power to bring the imitative arts to maturity. This, if believed or known, would be no little incitement to induſtry, and no ſmall inducement to apply with the utmoſt aſſiduity to the ſtudy of eloquence; an art of itſelf ſo deſirable, and attended with ſuch immediate benefit to the poſſeſſors, but which would acquire a new value, and become a national concern, if it were known

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to be productive of such noble consequences, by it's influence on the other arts. Whereas, on a contrary supposition, should the opinions hitherto delivered upon this subject be established, that genius is a casual production arising from some lucky circumstances of air and climate, which have an influence upon the animal spirits, and from a happy conformation of the organs of the brain, &c. it is evident that all industry must be discouraged, as labour must prove ineffectual in all countries not possessed of such a happy climate, and in all persons who may not suppose themselves formed with that lucky structure of the organs. However advocates for such opinions may shew their own ingenuity, by the invention of many specious arguments to support them, I should be glad to know what benefit mankind is to reap from their labours? or what reward they should expect, even if they were capable of demonstrating principles, which indeed, in their own nature, can be founded upon nothing but conjecture; and which, if believed, might be productive of great mischief, and could not possibly do any good? For upon a proof of their system, whole nations, as well as individuals, must lay aside all attempts in the liberal arts, from an utter despair of meeting with success.

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

Good conſequences to Great Britain, ſhould the above opinions be found to be true.

ON a ſuppoſition that my hypotheſis is well founded, and that the perfection of eloquence would neceſſarily bring on the perfection of the liberal arts, I can not help here indulging myſelf in a view of the many glorious advantages which would reſult from it to Great Britain. Let us only ſuppoſe that the arts were in as high perfection here as at Athens or Rome, (and I ſhall hereafter ſhew from certain diſcoveries and advantages, which time has given us over the antients, that they may be carried to a much higher pitch) what muſt neceſſarily be the conſequence to this country?

Had we amongſt us ſuch excellent painters and ſculptors as thoſe of old, their works would ſoon call upon the attention of the public to have ſuitable edifices raiſed to be the repoſitories of theſe treaſures. Upon proper encouragement there would not be wanting men of true genius and capacity in architecture, who, applying themſelves wholly to the ſtudy of that art, might rival thoſe great antients, the ruins of whoſe works excite in us ſuch admiration. * 'A propoſal for building 'a parliament-houſe, courts of juſtice, royal palace, and other public edifices, ſuitable to the 'dignity of the nation,' would not then be laugh-

* *Biſhop of* Cloyne.

ed at as a vain affair; but theſe would be conſidered as works of neceſſity, and of the utmoſt benefit to the country. If all the public buildings as well as private palaces (for ſuch may ſeveral houſes of our nobility be termed) had been raiſed in the true ſtyle of architecture; and if theſe were every where adorned with pieces of painting and ſculpture, exceeding thoſe of all other countries, would not London be the grand emporium of arts, as ſhe already is of commerce? Would not perſons flock hither from all parts of the world to ſee and admire theſe works? Does not her very ſituation, and the eaſe with which her ſhores are acceſſible to people from all corners of the earth, give England a natural right in this reſpect over all other countries in the world? And has not France raviſhed this from her merely by art and induſtry? Can it be doubted, conſidering our great advantages in point of natural beauties, if we excelled the French alſo in thoſe of the artificial kind, but that London would be more reſorted to by travellers from all parts of the earth than Paris? Nay, ſhould we not draw over the French themſelves in as great abundance as the Engliſh now travel into France? Would not this be the ſureſt means of increaſing the wealth and power of England? Her wealth, from the money brought in by ſuch a concourſe of foreigners, and from the diſpoſal of the moſt valuable of her commodities, produced by the ingenuity of her artiſts (an inexhauſtible fund) over the whole earth: her power, from the great figure ſhe muſt make, and

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the high eſtimation in which ſhe muſt be held by all other nations; a point of more real conſequence than extent of territory or number of forces; which has been ſufficiently exemplified in the little commonwealth of Athens.

All the commerce which Great Britain carries on in it's ſeveral branches does not contribute in any degree to her advantage, ſo much as a ſingle traffic would do in ſuch commodities, as are neceſſarily produced by a proper cultivation of the liberal arts. Nor could any thing ſo effectually promote her wealth, her power, her glory, and let me add, her ſafety. To be convinced of this, we need only take a view of the cauſes of the preſent ſplendor of France. Is ſhe not indebted for her flouriſhing ſtate chiefly to her attention to the arts? By giving due encouragement to painting and ſculpture, ſhe has produced many maſters, at leaſt of comparative excellence, in the arts of deſigning, colouring, engraving, chaſing, &c. And how greatly by this means has ſhe enhanced the price of her manufactures, in ſilks, laces, ornamental plate, all ſorts of toys and faſhions? That it is merely owning to a ſuperiority in point of faſhion and deſign, that the French commodities are ſo much ſought after, is evident from this circumſtance, that the Engliſh artiſans are univerſally allowed to exceed them in point of goodneſs of workmanſhip; and had they the advantage in other reſpects alſo, what infinite ſums might be ſaved to this nation, that are now carried into France to enrich our enemies?

and

and what large treaſures might be brought into this iſland from the other countries of the world, and even from France herſelf, to purchaſe ſuch commodities as ſhould be confeſſedly ſuperior to theirs? Would not this be the true way to bring down the power of France, by cutting off the ſources of her wealth? Would not this be the means of leſſening the admiration of her neighbours, and of raiſing the glory of Britain upon her ruins? And would not the weakneſs of France be the ſafety of England? Let us therefore ſuppoſe that architecture, ſculpture, with the ſeveral arts dependent on it, painting, poetry, and muſic, were in as high a degree of perfection here as at Athens, and conſequently ſo far ſuperior with regard to their ſtate in France that there could be no ſort of competition; would not England in this caſe be the country reſorted to by the travellers of the whole world? Would not our language be learned, and our noble authors ſtudied by the people of all nations? Would not the perfect knowlege which muſt then be ſpread of our noble conſtitution, of our religion, of the glorious writings of our philoſophers and divines, ſtrike them with awe and veneration, and make them acknowlege an undoubted ſuperiority in us over all other countries? Would not London in this caſe become the capital not of England, but of the world; and England be conſidered as a queen among the nations? On the contrary, what would be the ſtate of France in this caſe? Would ſhe not ſink proportionably low as England ſhould be raiſed;

raiſed? Should ours come to be ſtudied and univerſally known, the poverty of their language would, upon compariſon, bring it into contempt, and of courſe into neglect. They would no longer have ſuch crowds of foreigners reſorting to their capital, whoſe reſidence amongſt them contributes ſo largely to their wealth. They would no longer give the laws of faſhion to Europe, but receive them from us. Their fantaſtical pieces of workmanſhip, calculated to captivate the ignorant and capricious, would no longer ſtand the teſt, when compared with ſuch as were ſuperior in point of true taſte founded upon good ſenſe. Deprived of this ſort of merchandiſe, ſhe could have no other reſource, as the natural produce of her ſoil will ſcarce afford ſufficient for the maintenance of her natives. Thus that kingdom would be reduced to the degree of weakneſs, which is the neceſſary conſequence of too large extent of territory without a ſufficient number of inhabitants. The bulk of the people would be poor and wretched thro' want of induſtry, which would of courſe flag with commerce; and the ſpirits of the better ſort would decay with the glory of their country: ſince nothing has contributed ſo much to excite in them their high notions of honour, as the fancied greatneſs of their *Monarque*, and the apparent ſuperiority which their country has gained, by great art, in many points, over their neighbours. But ſhould the ſpells and charms, by which ſhe has faſcinated all the nations round her, once be broke; ſhould the ſuperior genius of Britain

Britain prevail, and ſhine forth in it's ſplendor; the boaſted glory of France would vaniſh like a miſt before the morning ſun. When the eyes of Europe ſhould be opened, and the true light ſhine before them, they would wonder how they could have been ſo long impoſed upon by falſe appearances, and tinſel gliſtening. Thus ſunk in the eſtimation of their neighbours, the French would ſoon ſink in their own; and in a ſhort time, far from thinking of attacking others, they would ſcarce be able to defend themſelves.

If the perfection of the liberal arts would be the means of raiſing Great Britain, in point of glory and power, above all her neighbours; neither would it contribute leſs to her domeſtic order, health, and happineſs. Theſe depend upon the morality of a nation; and it can be demonſtrated, that the morality of a people ſo circumſtanced as we are, and under ſuch a conſtitution, muſt in a great meaſure depend upon a proper cultivation of the arts. This I ſhall attempt to do in the following manner. From the nature of our ſituation, which has brought on an extenſive commerce, much wealth is neceſſarily poured in upon us. This, from the nature of our conſtitution, is more equally diffuſed thro' the inhabitants, and becomes more certainly their property than under any other form of government. A ſuperfluity of wealth of courſe increaſes a deſire of pleaſure (ſo natural to man) as it furniſhes thoſe who are poſſeſſed of it with the means of gratifying that deſire. Now it may be confidently aſſerted,

aſſerted, that no nation upon earth, in proportion to the number of it's inhabitants, contains ſo many individuals poſſeſſed of more wealth than is requiſite to ſupply the neceſſaries of life, as England: conſequently, that there is no nation where a deſire of pleaſure is likely to be ſo epidemic. Upon the right direction of this deſire therefore will the morality and happineſs of the people in a great meaſure depend.

Pleaſures are of three kinds; intellectual, which ariſe from the culture of the underſtanding; ſenſitive, from the gratification of the appetites and paſſions; and reflective, from the powers of the imagination. To obtain the firſt requires cloſe ſtudy, labour, and application; they are likely therefore only to be purſued by ſuch as have their fortunes to make: the ſecond are common to all men, as well as to brutes: and the laſt ſeem to be particularly calculated for thoſe whoſe independent fortunes render it not neceſſary to take the pains requiſite to arrive at the higheſt degree of intellectual pleaſure, and yet whoſe reaſon may be ſufficiently improved not to give themſelves wholly up to ſenſual gratifications.

The higheſt pleaſures of imagination ariſe from the imitative arts. It is of the utmoſt conſequence therefore to an opulent nation, that they ſhould be in a proper degree of perfection. Theſe pleaſures, being of a middle kind between the rational and ſenſitive, and partaking of both, are productive of good or bad conſequences according as they incline moſt to one or the other.

When the rational is predominant, they ſhorten the road to wiſdom, and exhibit virtue in the moſt amiable light: they enlarge the underſtanding, and better the heart. But, when the ſenſitive prevails, they become bawds to the paſſions, and only ſerve to extend the empire of vice and ignorance.

The truth of this will ſufficiently appear, upon conſidering the different effects produced by the arts, according as they are employed in the cauſe of virtue, or of vice. Nothing can convey inſtruction with delight, ennoble the mind, or enlarge the heart ſo much, as good poems, plays, pieces of oratory, painting, and ſculpture, repreſenting great and glorious actions and perſons. Nothing can ſo effectually debauch the mind and corrupt the heart, as the proſtitution of theſe arts to lewd and ſenſual purpoſes.

The morality of a nation depends therefore more upon the right direction of the imitative arts than is imagined. The example of the nobility, gentry, and perſons of independent fortunes, is ever followed by the lower claſs of people: and, when that leads to ſenſuality, the whole nation will of courſe be corrupt. Nor can I ſee, as matters are circumſtanced, but that the rich muſt, by a fatal neceſſity, be plunged into vice. Wealth of courſe makes pleaſure their chief object. That of the rational kind is too laborious for perſons whoſe minds and bodies have been rendered effeminate and indolent from the eaſineſs of their circumſtances. Whilſt they are impelled to the

the ſenſual by paſſions from within, and are allured by excitements from without, they naturally fall into gratifications of this kind, from the eaſe with which they are obtained. If, therefore, the pleaſures of imagination, which alone could hinder them from being abſorbed in thoſe, by filling up their time with delight, inſtead of being of the ſame ſide with virtue, ſhould become confederates with vice; would not all reſtraints be taken off from their unruly appetites? would they not be plunged into ſenſuality by double violence? would they not be allured to it by double charms?

If we compare the ſtate of England with any other country, we ſhall find, from the very nature of our conſtitution, that the cultivation and proper direction of the pleaſures of imagination are more eſſential to us than to any other people upon earth. In deſpotic governments people may be reſtrained by fear from indulging too much in ſenſual pleaſures *, to the prejudice of ſociety and government. In republics, rewards, honours, and emulation, may ſpirit up perſons of the higheſt birth and fortune to laborious ſtudies, and to dedicate themſelves chiefly to pleaſures of the rational kind †. But in Britain, where the rich need not fear puniſhments, and where rewards are not the neceſſary conſequences of improved abilities; nothing can poſſibly hinder perſons of

* Of this there is a remarkable inſtance in the abſtinence of the Turks from wine.

† The hiſtories of the Greek and Roman republics abound with inſtances of this ſort.

independent fortunes from laying themſelves out chiefly for the gratification of their ſenſual appetites, but a true taſte for the liberal arts, and a right enjoyment of the pleaſures of imagination.

Nothing elſe can form a ſufficient barrier againſt the devaſtations of luxury, and the inevitable deſtruction which is ever it's attendant. A learned luxury does not add ſo much to the ornament, as the ſtrength of a nation. It ennobles the mind, and excites an ardor for great and heroic atchievements. It gives an higher reliſh for liberty and virtue, and teaches men how to ſet a true value on thoſe ineſtimable bleſſings. It is an antidote againſt the poiſonous qualities of exceſſive wealth, and makes ſuperfluity ſalutary to a nation. There is no fear that money can be poured too faſt into a country, or be productive of any bad effects, where the arts flouriſh, and a general good taſte for them prevails. In ſuch caſe, the endeavours to merit reward would increaſe in proportion to the power of rewarding; the number of artiſts, to the number of encouragers; and no fund of wealth can be more copious or inexhauſtible than the fund of genius. Let us ſuppoſe this to be the ſtate of Britain; let us ſuppoſe a ſufficient number of real artiſts, and a ſufficient quantity of true taſte in the people; how glorioufly might the ſuperfluity of the rich be employed in rewarding merit, in encouraging genius, and in purchaſing their noble productions? How much more delightfully to themſelves, as well as beneficially to their country, might their time be employed in the ſtudy of

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theſe agreeable arts, and in the rational enjoyments which they beſtow; than in gaming, drinking, and all other modiſh amuſements?

It was to the want of pleaſures of this kind, that all the great empires of the world chiefly owed their deſtruction. When conqueſt introduced wealth, and wealth ſtimulated a deſire of pleaſure, the rich had none to chuſe but of the ſenſual kind. Intemperance debaſed their minds, and enervated their bodies. Thus they fell an eaſy prey to the firſt warlike people that attacked them. The conquerors in their turn, allured by the ſame delights, were diſſolved in voluptuouſneſs, and met with the ſame fate from ſome more hardy people. Thus fell the mighty empires of the Aſſyrians, Perſians, Medes, Ægyptians, &c. If it be ſaid that Athens and Rome alſo fell, tho' the liberal arts were carried in both places to the higheſt perfection, it can be ſhewn that their ruin was not owing to the ſame cauſe. The ſtamina of thoſe ſtates were bad, the vitals were unſound; and, far from wondering at their diſſolution, we ought only to be ſurpriſed how they laſted ſo long. It can be ſhewn, that the cultivation of the arts contributed much to prolong their date; but no remedy could have been effectual, when the diſeaſe was mortal. With reſpect to Athens, it is well known that ſhe was indebted for her riſe, and the great figure ſhe made in the world, to the arts; but her ambition increaſed with her flouriſhing ſtate, and far exceeded her power. The extreme jealouſy which the Athenians had of their

liberty, by it's exceſs, degenerated into a vice; and the oſtraciſm, introduced by it, often brought them into danger, by depriving the ſtate of it's ableſt guardians. It is true that the empire of the ſea gave Athens a power, to which ſhe was not at all entitled from the ſmall extent of her territories. The obſervation made by Monteſquieu upon this head is well worth the attention of every Engliſhman. The paſſage is this. 'But 'this Athenian lordſhip of the ſeas deſerves to 'be more particularly mentioned. Athens, ſays 'Xenophon, rules the ſea: but as the country of 'Attica is joined to the continent, it is ravaged 'by enemies, while the Athenians are engaged in 'diſtant expeditions. Their leaders ſuffer their 'lands to be deſtroyed, and ſecure their wealth 'by ſending it to ſome iſland. The populace, 'who are not poſſeſſed of lands, have no uneaſi-'neſs. But if the Athenians inhabited an iſland, 'and, beſides this, enjoyed the empire of the ſea, 'they would, as long as they were poſſeſſed of 'theſe advantages, be able to annoy others, and 'at the ſame time be out of all danger of being 'annoyed.' Monteſquieu's obſervation upon the above paſſage from Xenophon is this; 'One 'would imagine that Xenophon was ſpeaking of 'England.'.

Here we may ſee that the naval power of Athens muſt have received continual checks from the nature of her ſituation; and that her victories at ſea might at any time be ballanced by the deſtruction of her territories, and even her city. In

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this reſpect therefore it will at once occur what an amazing advantage Great Britain has over her. But when we conſider the ſmall number of her citizens, which ſeldom amounted to more than twenty thouſand, we ſhall rather have occaſion to wonder at the degree of power to which her ſtate was raiſed, and that ſhe was able ſo long to maintain it, than at it's deſtruction. The utmoſt activity in each individual was abſolutely neceſſary to the preſervation of ſo ſmall a body. When therefore the ſtudy of philoſophy became pretty general amongſt them; when the contemplative was preferred to the active life; when perſons of the greateſt abilities amongſt them withdrew from public affairs to the conſideration of their own private happineſs; the ſtate was of courſe deprived of the beſt heads to direct it, and the braveſt hearts to defend it. And this alone was ſufficient to bring on the ruin of Athens.

If we even add, that the very means which raiſed them to greatneſs, if not properly reſtrained, muſt produce their deſtruction; that the too great indulgence to a love * of the liberal arts muſt have had as bad effects with reſpect to the

* The love of the arts muſt have got to a moſt vicious height, when the people expended larger ſums in the decorations of their theatre than in a long war; and when they would not conſent, even tho' reduced to extremity, that any part of the fund raiſed for the ſupport of their public diverſions ſhould be applied to the exigencies of the ſtate, and voted him an enemy to his country who ſhould make ſuch a motion.

ſafety of ſuch a ſmall body, as the love of vice in larger ſtates: if we allow that a learned luxury, becoming epidemical amongſt a few thouſands, might effectually diſqualify them from the activity neceſſary to the preſervation of their country, as that of the ſenſual kind amongſt millions; the argument will not be concluſive againſt the arts themſelves, but againſt the abuſe of them: nor ſhould it be any diſcouragement to the cultivation of thoſe arts in another country otherwiſe circumſtanced. The ſtate of Athens in this caſe muſt as neceſſarily become a bankrupt, as a man of a private fortune would endeavour, in theſe ſorts of expences, to emulate a prince. But we may ſay that the eſtate of Britain, with reſpect to that of Athens, is immenſe; and that ſhe may afford to lay out in ſuperfluities what would have beggared the other. Were a number equal to the whole body of the citizens of Athens employed here wholly in the liberal arts, they would not be miſſed in the ſtate; and there would ſtill be many millions left, out of which guardians might be choſen for the public ſafety, both in point of counſel and valour.

Yet we ſee, under all their diſadvantages, what noble efforts this poliſhed people made for their liberty (efforts never known in thoſe undone by ſenſual luxury) and how long their fate was deferred by the oratory of one ſingle man.

The deſtruction of the Roman republic was alſo owing to a conſtitutional diſeaſe. The eſtabliſhment of the tribunitial authority was an incurable

curable wound in the very vitals of this ſtate. This is admirably explained by the all-piercing genius of our Shakeſpear, where he makes Coriolanus ſay,

* ‘ And my ſoul aker
‘ To know, when two authorities are up,
‘ Neither ſupreme, how ſoon confuſion
‘ May enter ’twixt the gap of both, and take
‘ The one by the other.’

This was the ſource of perpetual feuds and conteſts; and the people at length, grown weary of ſuch an unquiet and turbulent life, were prepared to welcome any change of government. Every one who is acquainted with the ſtory of Sylla muſt ſee, that his tyranny might have taken place ſooner, had it not been for his extraordinary moderation. And it is well known that, as Demoſthenes for ſome time reſpited the fate of Athens, ſo did Cicero, by his eloquence, that of Rome; which otherwiſe, inſtead of a Cæſar, might have owned Cataline for a maſter. But it is well worth obſerving, that Rome never appeared in ſuch glory, never enjoyed ſuch happineſs at home, nor was ſo much reſpected abroad, as during the time that the arts flouriſhed in their higheſt degree of perfection. When they diſappeared, ſenſuality alone took place, produced the ſame effects at Rome as in other great empires, and brought about her total deſtruction. She depended on her conqueſts, and univerſal dominion, for her preſervation; but the

* Coriolanus, act iii. ſcene 1.

empire periſhed by it's own unwieldineſs, and Rome fell by her own ſtrength. Here we may take notice of the advantage which Great Britain has over thoſe two famous nations, from her very ſituation. As an iſland, ſhe is free from the dangers to which Athens was always expoſed: and as an iſland alſo, ſhe is reſtrained from that fatal deſire of extending her conqueſts, which has ever proved the ruin of all ambitious countries.

Since therefore the arts might be of ſuch advantage to the proſperity of Britain; ſince we might enjoy all the benefits reſulting from them, in as high a degree as the Athenians did, without any dangerous conſequences to be feared from them; ſince they might contribute to our glory as much as they did to that of Rome, whilſt they reſided there, without fear of their vaniſhing ſo ſoon, as the native excellence of our conſtitution affords ſtrong hopes of it's preſervation; what cauſe can be aſſigned that they have hitherto made ſo ſmall a progreſs in this iſland? Is there any thing in the ſoil not congenial to them? Is there an impoſſibility of their flouriſhing here? This is worth enquiry.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIII.

Whether it is not probable that the arts might arrive at as high a pitch in this country, as at Athens or Rome?

IT has been before obſerved, that to the perfection of the imitative arts four things are chiefly neceſſary; viz. genius, application, proper ſubjects, and ſuitable inſtruments. Let us ſee how the people of Great Britain ſtand with reſpect to theſe four articles. And firſt, as to genius.

The inſtances of the force of genius in the natives of this country with regard to the imitative arts are too many and too apparent to need any enumeration. Whereever they have had living ſubjects to draw from, they have not failed to produce the ſtrongeſt reſemblance, and the moſt forcible expreſſion. If they have failed in the more exalted views of human nature, it is becauſe there were no where proper objects in life to be found, from which they might receive the impreſſion. Hogarth has admirably repreſented ſuch nature as he found. Our writers of comedy have out-done all the reſt of the world in the variety as well as exact drawing of the characters from the life. Our tragic authors indeed, one only excepted, for the above reaſon have fallen very ſhort in theirs. Mr. Garrick muſt be allowed to be inimitable in the repreſentation of ſuch comic characters as he has an opportunity of obſerving

in the world; nor does he fall ſhort of equal perfection in ſuch parts of tragic characters as can be taken from life. The forcible and natural expreſſion of his madneſs in Lear could hardly have been repreſented in ſuch lively colours, had he not borrowed it from the ſchool of nature, from Bedlam. This reminds me of the excellent figures of the two lunatics done by Cibber. Nor can it be doubted from the place where they ſtand, and the opportunities which he muſt have had, but that the admirable expreſſion to be ſeen in thoſe ſtatues was taken immediately from life. This is the more likely when it is conſidered that none of his other works contributed much to his honour, in which, like the reſt of his fraternity, he probably contented himſelf with copying other maſters.

But tho' there never had been any inſtance of this ſort, tho' there never had been any production in the arts worthy of admiration, I ſhould not ſtill heſitate to conclude, that Great Britain has abounded more with genius than any other country in the globe; however, it has been obſcured for want of encouragement, or buried thro' want of opportunity to diſplay itſelf: for this unanſwerable reaſon; that the perfection of the imitative arts is more neceſſary to the well-being of Britain, than to any other nation upon earth; and providence furniſhes all countries, in the moſt liberal manner, with whatever is moſt neceſſary to their well-being. But we do not want inſtances; no, by the immortal names of Milton and Shakeſpear, we do not want inſtances of the nobleſt kind! When we conſider

conſider the hiſtory of theſe men, and the concurrence of wonderful circumſtances which produced their admirable writings; there appears to be ſomething miraculous throughout. As to Milton, it is well known that he paſſed the moſt vigorous of his years in ſtate affairs, and diſagreeable controverſies. Had he not outlived Cromwell, we ſhould never have known him as a favourite of the muſes. After the reſtoration, if his life had not been preſerved by extraordinary means, when he was particularly marked out for deſtruction; the Paradiſe loſt had never been written, and that firſt of poets would never have thrown ſuch a luſtre on the Engliſh nation. And under what circumſtances was this great work performed? Diſtreſſed in his affairs, deprived of his ſight, advanced in years, tormented by the moſt acute diſorders, ſurrounded with perils, and the object of hatred and contempt to the greateſt part of his countrymen. Under ſuch circumſtances was the nobleſt poem, that ever appeared in any age or country, begun and finiſhed. What but the moſt vivid genius that ever animated a human breaſt could have inſpired ſuch an undertaking, or ſupported him in the proſecution of it? But when we conſider the poor reward which attended his labours, the cold reception which his work met with in that taſteleſs age; that it lay for a long time on his bookſeller's hands as waſte paper; what ſhall we ſay to his perſeverance under theſe diſcouragements, to his writing other pieces inimitable in their kind, and only excelled by his own great

work?

work? Can it be accounted for on any other principle than that he was favoured with a larger portion of etherial fire, than ever yet was beſtowed on mortal?

The ſtory of Shakeſpear is well known. That he had but a ſlender education, and ſerved an apprenticeſhip, in a country town, to a mechanical trade, in which occupation he might probably have continued all his days, had not the danger incurred on account of a youthful frolic in deer-ſtealing forced him to fly to London. There chance and want, not any ſpurrings of genius, led him to the ſtage. At that time it was the cuſtom to act plays in the day-time, and perſons of faſhion, inſtead of going in coaches, uſed to ride to the theatre. The firſt employment of our Shakeſpear was to hold ſome of their horſes for hire; which for a time afforded him a livelihood. Being often obſerved by ſome of the performers in this low office, and having ſomething promiſing in his aſpect, he was at length introduced behind the ſcenes in quality of prompter's boy. Such were the beginnings, ſuch was the introduction of that great genius into that field of action, where he afterwards diſplayed his powers in ſo aſtoniſhing a manner. Here is another glareing inſtance of the ſuperiority of Engliſh genius over that of all other countries. For by the force of that alone, without education, without opportunities of improvement, without the excitements of fame, or conſiderable profit, when the ſtage was as yet in it's infancy, and the national taſte univerſally

univerſally bad; has this man outdone, in the moſt eſſential points of his art, all the great writers of Greece and Rome, who were amply ſupplied with all poſſible means of cultivating their talents to the utmoſt, who were ſtimulated to diſplay them in the higheſt perfection, by the moſt ample rewards, that ambition, love of fame, or deſire of wealth could graſp at.

Theſe two great men ſeem to have been placed by the hand of Providence upon an eminence, like two large beacons, to illuminate the land; that his goodneſs might be ſeen by all, and his ways juſtified to man: to ſhew his parental care over his creatures, in ſupplying them with whatever is needful to their happineſs: to give an evident proof of his juſt diſtributions, that, as Britain ſtood more in need for genius than any other country in the world, ſo he had ſupplied it with a larger ſhare. But, tho' the Almighty may ſometimes work wonders, in compaſſion to our weakneſs, and to aſſiſt our blindneſs; yet, when our eyes are opened, and proper information received, all is done on his part; and we are left to ourſelves to make a proper uſe of the grace which he has vouchſafed to us. Tho' two have ariſen amongſt us who ſeem to have been inſpired, and to have been conducted to their point of perfection by means preternatural; yet it is from application and encouragement alone that we can hope to ſee many ſuch. For want of theſe, who can tell how many Miltons may have been loſt in the purſuits of worldly intereſt and grandeur, and how

many

many Shakeſpears may have been hid behind counters? If we continue in the ſame inattention to ſuch material points, who can tell how many preſent, and future geniuſes, capable of contributing to the benefit and ornament of this country, in the higheſt degree, may be wholly abſorbed in worldly purſuits?

Upon the whole it may be concluded with certainty, that it is not for want of genius that Britain has not excelled all other countries in the liberal arts; but ſomething elſe; what that is let us now enquire. The next point to be conſidered is application.

Application in one country is as much conſtitutional, as indolence is in another. The difference of climates is the cauſe of theſe different effects. A happy temperature of air produces the one, extremes of heat or cold the other. 'Tis as painful to the people to be without employment in the firſt, as it is to them to enter upon or continue in action in the laſt. In the one they ſet themſelves to work, in order to avoid uneaſineſs; in the other they muſt be allured to labour by reward, or driven to it by puniſhment. Perhaps there never was a people in the world ſo conſtitutionally induſtrious as the Engliſh; nor can all hiſtory produce ſo many examples of great works, wherein the mental powers are diſplayed in the moſt extraordinary manner; undertaken and carried on with ſo little aſſiſtance or encouragement. Their labours ſeem to have been the reſult of an internal active principle, and to have been but little influenced

fluenced by external cauſes. If therefore to this conſtitutional activity there ſhould be added all the aids neceſſary to quicken their progreſs, and all due encouragement to chear and enliven their ſpirits in their fatiguing purſuits; can it be a matter of doubt whether the Engliſh would exceed all other nations, antient and modern, as much in application as they do in genius?

Proper ſubjects come next to be conſidered. It has been already ſhewn, that proper ſubjects for the imitative arts, which are calculated only for the uſe and delight of man, muſt be ſuch as can contribute moſt to his advantage and pleaſure: and that therefore views of human nature, in it's moſt exalted and beautiful ſtate, are the fitteſt ſubjects for imitation, as being moſt likely to anſwer thoſe ends. To know what that ſtate is, we need only enquire into thoſe points which particularly diſtinguiſh the human from the brute creation, and give man the great ſuperiority over all other animals. The moſt obvious diſtinction of all is that of ſpeech, without which reaſon would in a manner be uſeleſs to us. By ſpeech I do not here mean the mere articulation of words, a faculty which ſome birds have as well as we, but the power of communicating our thoughts to each other in their full force, and impreſſing them ſtrongly on the minds of the hearers, by means of ſuitable and concomitant tones, geſtures, and looks. It is this ſort of ſpeech which dignifies man above all other creatures, and which places him in the moſt conſpicuous point of view.

Atchievements

Atchievements in war, and deeds of arms, may excite our wonder, and aſtoniſh our fancy; but views of this ſort are only of human nature deformed, and degraded; as the higheſt courage, ſhewn on theſe occaſions, does not exceed that of brute beaſts. Reaſon and the power of communicating it are the great characteriſtics of man; and it is from the proper exerciſe of theſe talents alone, that uſeful and delightful views of human nature can be taken. A complete orator, when he ſpeaks in public, preſents at once to view all the perfections both of mind and body with which it hath pleaſed God to adorn man, and which are never ſeen together in equal force or beauty in any other perſon, or upon any other occaſion. Here then alone is to be found the true pattern for the imitative arts, the only juſt model for the poet, the muſician, the painter, the ſtatuary to copy from. If we therefore are more deficient in ſubjects, than the artiſts of Athens and Rome, it muſt be our own fault; ſince our talents can not be ſaid to be inferior, and ſince we have every excitement to the ſtudy of oratory which they had, and rather in a ſtronger degree.

The laſt point to be conſidered was that of ſuitable inſtruments. In this reſpect it can not be doubted but that we have amazing advantages over the antients. With regard to muſical inſtruments, from a view of the ſtructure of theirs, it is impoſſible they could have been ſo perfect as thoſe of later invention. In painting we are poſſeſſed of all the colours which they had, and

have

have many ſuper-added, by our commerce with the Eaſt and Weſt-Indies, which muſt have been unknown to them. All inſtruments uſed in ſculpture, graving, &c. are with us in the higheſt degree of perfection: and were the Engliſh language properly cultivated, it would be found to be a much more complete inſtrument for the uſe of poets than what they were poſſeſſed of.

If therefore upon the whole we excel them in genius, application, and inſtruments; what can there be wanting to make the arts flouriſh more here than ever they did in Athens or Rome, but proper ſubjects, and due encouragement? It has been already ſhewn how proper ſubjects are to be obtained; and due encouragement, from the very nature of our conſtitution, can proceed only from a general good taſte in the people; which muſt ariſe from the ſame ſource as the ſubjects. The quantity of the one will neceſſarily increaſe in proportion to the number of the other.

When we conſider that the cultivation of the arts is abſolutely neceſſary to the well-being of this country; that the means are proportioned to the neceſſity; that, as luxury muſt be a neceſſary diſeaſe here, and likely to rage with more violence than any where elſe, the grand phyſician increaſed the quantity and power of the medicine; that there was an uncommon ſtrength of conſtitution given to ſtruggle with the diſorder, and the benign influence of the pureſt religion ſuperadded: we can not but conclude, that this nation has been more peculiarly favoured by Providence than any

other

other upon earth. When we conſider, that from our very ſituation we are leſs liable to be attacked by enemies than any other great people ever were, and by the ſame means we are alſo precluded from the folly of ambition in endeavouring to extend our dominions by conqueſt, which has ever ended in the ruin of the greateſt empires; that the intellectual faculties were never diſplayed in ſo high a degree as by the natives of this country in their ſearches into philoſophy, and all manner of ſcience; that the people ſeem to be born with the beſt natural diſpoſitions, and are above all others remarkably brave, generous, charitable, and humane; why does not Britain at this day eclipſe in all things all other nations that either do or have exiſted? why may ſhe not promiſe duration to her ſtate 'till time ſhall be no more?

But with all theſe amazing advantages, a view of our preſent ſituation, drawn by a * maſterly hand, it is to be feared is too juſt to leave room for ſo agreeable a picture, or to afford ſuch flattering proſpects. The preſent ſtate of Britain is thus repreſented by one of the wiſeſt men, and of the moſt penetrating genius, that any age or country has produced. 'It muſt be owned, that little 'can be hoped if we conſider the corrupt dege-'nerate age we live in. I know it is an old folly 'to make peeviſh complaints of the times, and 'charge the common failures of human nature on 'a particular age. One may nevertheleſs venture

* The biſhop of Cloyne.

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'to affirm, that the preſent hath brought forth 'new and portentous villainies, not to be paralleled 'in our own or any other hiſtory. We have 'been long preparing for ſome great cataſtrophe. 'Vice and villainy have by degrees grown reputable amongſt us; our infidels have paſſed for 'fine gentlemen, and our venal traitors for men 'of ſenſe, who knew the world. We have made 'a jeſt of public ſpirit, and cancelled all reſpect 'for whatever our laws and religion repute ſacred. 'The old Engliſh modeſty is quite worn off, and, 'inſtead of bluſhing for our crimes, we are 'aſhamed only of piety and virtue. In ſhort, 'other nations have been wicked, but we are the 'firſt who have been wicked upon principle.

'The truth is, our ſymptoms are ſo bad, that, 'notwithſtanding all the care and vigilance of the 'legiſlature, it is to be feared the final period of 'our ſtate approaches. Strong conſtitutions, whether politic or natural, do not feel light diſorders. But when they are ſenſibly affected, the 'diſtemper is for the moſt part violent, and of ill 'prognoſtic. Free governments, like our own, 'were planted by the Goths in moſt parts of Europe; and, tho' we all know what they are 'come to, yet we ſeem diſpoſed rather to follow 'their example than to profit by it.

'Whether it be in the order of things, that 'civil ſtates ſhould have, like natural products, 'their ſeveral periods of growth, perfection, and 'decay; or whether it be an effect, as ſeems more 'probable, of human folly, that as induſtry pro-

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'duces wealth, ſo wealth ſhould produce vice, and 'vice ruin.

'God grant the time be not near, when men 'ſhall ſay, this iſland was once inhabited by a re- 'ligious, brave, ſincere people, of plain uncor- 'rupt manners, reſpecting inbred worth, rather 'than titles and appearances; aſſertors of liberty, 'lovers of their country, jealous of their own 'rights, and unwilling to infringe the rights of 'others; improvers of learning and uſeful arts, 'enemies to luxury, tender of other men's lives, 'and prodigal of their own; inferior in nothing 'to the old Greeks or Romans, and ſuperior to 'each of thoſe people in the perfections of the 'other. Such were our anceſtors during their 'riſe and greatneſs; but they degenerated, grew 'ſervile flatterers of men in power, adopted epi- 'curean notions, became venal, corrupt, injuri- 'ous; which drew upon them the hatred of God 'and man, and occaſioned their final ruin.'

This is but a melancholy picture of our preſent condition, and affords but a gloomy proſpect of what is to come. But *de republica nunquam deſperandum* was an old Roman maxim, and ought much more to be a Britiſh one. There is a certain vigour, an innate ſtrength in our conſtitution, peculiar to ourſelves, which may give us hopes of reviving, even when ſuch ſymptoms are upon us, as in any other age or nation would be reckoned ſure prognoſtics of approaching ruin. We are favoured by Providence with ſingular bleſſings, which no other country ever equally enjoyed. It is

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the abuſe, or neglect of theſe, which has been the cauſe of our decay, and we only want to know and apply them to their right uſe, to be inſtantly reſtored to health, as by a charm. This, as the biſhop of Cloyne has in another place (I hope) prophetically ſaid, 'might not only prevent our 'final ruin, but alſo render us a more happy and 'flouriſhing people than ever.'

It is an obſervation of Dr. Swift, that 'there are 'few who turn their thoughts to examine how 'the diſeaſes in a ſtate are bred, that haſten it's 'end; which would however be a very uſeful en-'quiry. For altho' we can not prolong the period 'of a commonwealth beyond the decree of heaven, 'or the date of it's nature, any more than hu-'man life beyond the ſtrength of the ſeminal 'virtue; yet we may manage a ſickly conſtitution, 'and preſerve a ſtrong one; we may watch and 'prevent accidents; we may turn off a great blow 'from without, and purge away an ill humour 'that is lurking within: and, by theſe, and other 'ſuch methods, render a ſtate long-lived, altho' 'not immortal.'

If therefore the cauſe of our diſorders be once known, it will probably not be difficult to find a remedy.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIV.

The chief diſorders of Britain *traced to one ſource.*

WHY ſhould we look for any other cauſe of the decay of religion, but the contempt of the clergy? and the contempt of the clergy is ſufficiently accounted for from their incapacity to diſcharge the principal duties of their office, thro' a material defect in education. The decay of morality has in all countries ever followed that of religion; and this muſt be more particularly the caſe, where the perſons appointed to be it's teachers and guardians are ſo unequal to the taſk.

Want of knowlege, and a quantity of falſe knowlege, far worſe than none, are the neceſſary conſequences in a country of not ſtudying and underſtanding the language which is moſt generally read.

The low ſtate of the arts is owing to a falſe taſte, and falſe taſte proceeds from a want of uſing the proper means, early in life, of procuring a true one.

If our legiſlators have at any time acted wrong, how could it be otherwiſe expected, when there is no care taken in their education to qualify them for the diſcharge of ſo important an office?

If the bulk of our nobility and gentry give themſelves up to luxury, is it any wonder, when their affluence ſets them above the more laborious inveſtigations of reaſon; when they are not ſupplied with

with the rational pleaſures of imagination, but, on the contrary, are debauched by the corrupt ſtate of thoſe, and ſtill more ſtimulated to gratify ſenſual appetites?

Is it any wonder that the reſt of the nation ſhould follow their example?

The infinite variety of opinions is not at all ſurpriſing, nor that there ſhould be as many ſects of philoſophers in England as ever have appeared in the world; ſince great pains are taken, in the education of youth, to make them acquainted with all theſe; and, at the moſt dangerous time of life, when the judgement has leaſt power, they are left to themſelves to adopt what opinions they pleaſe, and to ſtick by ſuch as are moſt agreeable to them. Is it any wonder that their raw and weak underſtandings, bewildered in ſuch a maze of ſyſtems, ſhould make their eſcape from them into the leſs perplexing regions of ſcepticiſm?

That this iſland ſhould abound more in ſuicide than any other country upon earth, will no longer appear ſtrange, when it is conſidered that nothing brings the *tædium vitæ* ſo much as want of employment: and no education in the world qualifies men leſs for the active life than ours; though, from the very genius of the people, and the nature of our conſtitution, that ought to be it's chief end. When perſons, born with a reſtleſs active diſpoſition, do not find proper employment, or are engaged in ſuch as is not ſuitable to their genius; life becomes a burthen to them. This is a more rational way to account for the frequency of that

crime, than to attribute it to the peculiar qualities of our air, &c. Why is ſo fair a plea offered; why are any arguments urged to palliate ſo atrocious a crime? Why is the climate arraigned, and Providence blaſphemed, to excuſe ſelf-murder, upon a principle contrary to reaſon and fact? It is to be ſuppoſed that our climate has been always the ſame, and yet there was a time when that crime was as little known here as in any other country. In the reign of Elizabeth, when all found employment, it was hardly heard of; and the great frequency of it has been but of a very ſhort date, and ſince many people have had little to do. A gentleman, in a well-known recent inſtance, gave the true reaſon why it is grown ſo common, in a letter which, juſt before he ſhot himſelf, he wrote to his friends, who were then waiting for him at a tavern; wherein he ſaid, that he was weary of buckling and unbuckling his ſhoes every day.

Why is the climate called in upon all occaſions, as a general ſolution for all ſuch difficulties as are above the capacities of our minute philoſophers? Why is it to the changeableneſs of that, and to liberty, that the variety of manners, diſpoſitions, tempers, and humours in individuals, the infinite number of ſects in philoſophy, religion, and politics, are imputed? The climate has not always produced the ſame in this country; nor has liberty done it in others; why may they not all be referred to their true ſource, education? By that our opinions.

opinions and notions are formed; and by thoſe our actions are governed.

How is it poſſible that the Britiſh conſtitution can flouriſh, when the education of their youth is neither ſuited to it's end, it's nature, or it's principles?

In Athens and Rome there were two ſyſtems of education, which prevailed at two different æras; one in their flouriſhing, the other in their corrupt ſtate. In the firſt oratory and philoſophy were united; and the youth were trained up to be not only wiſe, but active members of ſociety. In the laſt philoſophy became the only ſtudy; the active was changed for the contemplative life; their time was chiefly employed in empty diſquiſitions, and diſputes about trifles; they, for the moſt part, became wiſe only in their own conceit, and were utterly incapacitated from being of any uſe to the public. By this latter education chiefly was Athens deſtroyed; and this was the ſyſtem which was adopted at Rome when in her ſtate of ſlavery and corruption.

Britain had her choice of theſe two methods. She has choſen the latter. What conſequences are to be expected from it?

But beſides her preference of the worſt mode of antient education, ſhe has adopted into her ſyſtem all the worſt of the modern. Every thing that is bad in the French is ſtudiouſly imitated by us; every thing that is good in their inſtitution wholly neglected.

Monteſquieu, in ſpeaking of the difference between antient and modern education, ſays, 'Another advantage their education had over ours; 'it was never effaced by contrary impreſſions. 'Epaminondas, the laſt year of his life, ſaid, 'heard, ſaw, and performed the very ſame things 'as at the age when he received the firſt princi-'ples of his education.

'In our days we receive three different or con-'trary educations, namely, of our parents, of our 'maſters, and of the world. What we learn in 'the latter, effaces all the ideas of the former.'

If this be really the caſe, how hopefully has the prime of life been employed?

To give a ſanction to the ſentiments which I have delivered upon this head, I ſhall ſubjoin a few queries of the biſhop of Cloyne, extracted from a pamphlet called the Queriſt.

Whether a general good taſte in a people would not greatly conduce to their thriving? and whether an uneducated gentry be not the greateſt of national evils?

Whether our peers and gentlemen are born legiſlators? or whether that faculty be acquired by ſtudy and reflection?

Whether to comprehend the real intereſt of a people, and the means to procure it, doth not imply ſome fund of knowlege, hiſtorical, moral, and political, with a faculty of reaſon improved by learning?

Whether a wiſe ſtate hath any intereſt nearer heart, than the education of youth?

What

What right the eldeſt ſon hath to the worſt education?

Whether it ſhould not ſeem worth while to erect a mart of literature in this kingdom, under wiſer regulations, and better diſcipline than any in Europe? and whether this would not be an infallible means of drawing men and money into the kingdom?

Whether in any order a good building can be made of bad materials? or whether any form of government can make an happy ſtate of bad individuals?

Whether it is poſſible that a ſtate ſhould not thrive, whereof the lower part were induſtrious, and the upper wiſe?

Whether Homer's compendium of education,

† Μυθων τε ρητηρ εμεναι πρηκτηρα τε εργων,

would not be a good rule for modern educators of youth? and whether half the learning and ſtudy of theſe kingdoms is not uſeleſs, for want of a proper delivery and pronunciation being taught in our ſchools and colleges?

Upon a review of the whole it muſt be allowed, that our ſyſtem of education is extremely defective, and that too in ſome of the moſt eſſential points. Firſt, in not providing properly for the

† This is a line from a ſpeech of Phœnix to Achilles, in the 9th book of the Iliad; and may be thus tranſlated:

Alike to practiſe eloquence and valour.

ſupport of religion, by neglecting to inſtruct thoſe who are to be it's guardians, in the moſt neceſſary qualification of all to the diſcharge of their ſacred function; as alſo for the ſupport of our conſtitution and civil liberties, in not taking care to train up the youth deſtined to compoſe the auguſt body of our legiſlature, in ſuch arts and ſtudies as can alone render them capable of filling that important poſt. Secondly, in making the paths of knowlege difficult and uncertain, by a total neglect of our own language. Thirdly, in omitting all care of the imitative arts, ſo eſſential to the well-being of this country. How far the revival of the art of oratory may contribute to remedy theſe defects, is ſubmitted to the judgement of the reader. If the reaſons urged upon that head ſhould appear to be of weight, there is no lover of his country who muſt not wiſh to ſee the attempt made, who muſt not wiſh to ſee it ſucceed. Should therefore an eaſy and practicable plan be propoſed, whereby this art might be taught by as ſure rules, and upon as certain principles as any other; whereby it might become open to all perſons who ſhould be deſirous of attaining it, and in a ſhort time ſpread univerſally thro' the nation: ſhould at the ſame time a ſcheme be offered for finiſhing the education of a gentleman, which, without at all interfering with the preſent eſtabliſhments either of ſchools or colleges, (an attempt which muſt ever prove as unſucceſsful as it is unneceſſary) ſhould render the Engliſh youth of fortune more accompliſhed, and better

better qualified for the proper diſcharge of all duties and offices in life, than any ſyſtem, not only of modern, but antient education, could have effected; and that this too ſhould be accompliſhed, not by an addition to, but a ſaving of expence; would the deſign meet with ſuitable encouragement?

Such a plan has the author of this eſſay ready to lay before the public. But as the ſucceſs of it (for reaſons obvious enough) muſt in a great meaſure depend upon a general perſuaſion that ſuch a one would not only be uſeful, but is abſolutely neceſſary; he has firſt choſen this method of ſounding people's opinions upon that head. If he ſhould find that the ſenſible and candid part of mankind join iſſue with him, it will be a ſufficient confirmation to him of the truth of his reaſoning, and he will proceed with alacrity from a moral certainty of ſucceſs in his undertaking. But if their voice ſhould be againſt him, he is far from having ſuch an opinion of his own underſtanding as to ſet it up in oppoſition to theirs. He knows when the heart is warmly engaged in any point, and the head has for any length of time been chiefly employed in the contemplation of one object, that reaſon in theſe caſes generally looks thro' a falſe medium, and conſequently can not ſee things in their true light. In ſuch a caſe, appearance is often miſtaken for reality, and the ſmalleſt degree of probability ſwelled into the moſt ample proof. Perhaps, like another Quixote, he has adorned another Dulcinea with all ſorts of imagi-

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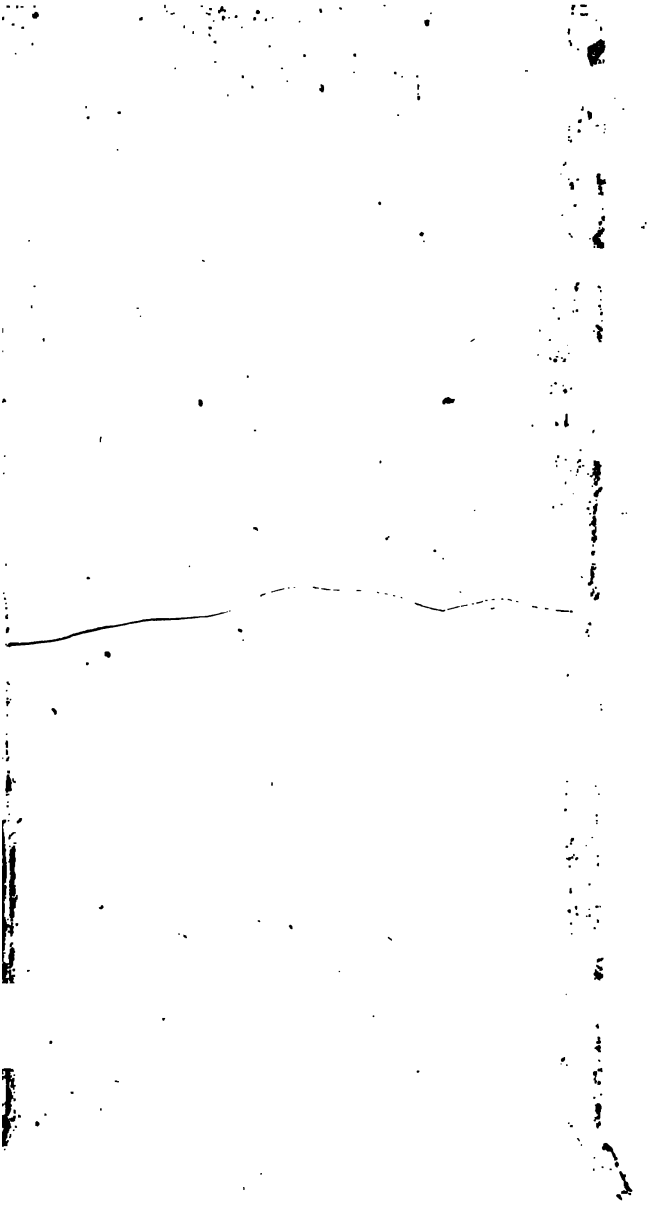
nary perfections, and is grown enamoured of the creature of his fancy. But tho' he ſhould labour under the ſame ſort of diſorder, he has a certain diſtruſt and diffidence about him, which are favourable ſymptoms that it is not incurable. If at ſome times he is wrapped up in a pleaſing delirium, and thinks that all is real and ſubſtantial, he has much more frequently his hours of doubting. In ſome of thoſe the voice of reaſon muſt reach him, and ſet him right whereever he has been in an error. To the ſenſible and judicious he ſubmits his opinions, and by their deciſions will he regulate his future conduct.

FINIS.



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